Holiday Crafting and Baking With Kids : Gifts,

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VISIT...

HOLIDAY CRAFTING & BAKING WITH KIDS

Gifts, Sweets, and Treats for the Whole Family!

BY Jessica Strand + PHOTOGRAPHS BY Aimée Herring

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BY Jessica Strand
PHOTOGRAPHS BY Aimée Herring

CHRONICLE BOOKS
SAN FRANCISCO

FOR

LUCIAN

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INTRODUCTION

As I began writing this book, I enlisted my ten-year-old son, Lucian, to help me. I knew what I thought would work, but without a kid's input, my holiday craft list would merely be an assumption of what kids might find "cool" or fun to make. We carefully went through the list of ideas I had jotted down for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, New Year's, and Boxing Day. He discarded the ones that had too many steps or looked "silly" and kept the ones he deemed "great." I asked him to ask his friends what they loved to make around the holidays as well.

Within a week or two, we had a list of twenty-five holiday crafts. Some were my favorites, some were his, and some we both loved equally. Of course, Lucian was drawn to the ones that involve candy—like the adorable gumdrop elves—but he also loved the freedom of making his own holiday wrap. I've always liked the tradition of stuffing stockings, so I had fun with the handmade stockings project, customizing the stocking with ribbon, my favorite color of rickrack, and buttons. Though it's a bit more complicated than some of the other crafts, the star garland was a favorite for both of us because it turns out so pretty and festive.

Each of the crafts in this book was created especially for a particular holiday and tradition. And all the projects are simple to put together—you don't have to be a crafty person. The step-by-step instructions and materials lists make nearly all the crafts doable for kids aged seven and up, and there are even a few for the

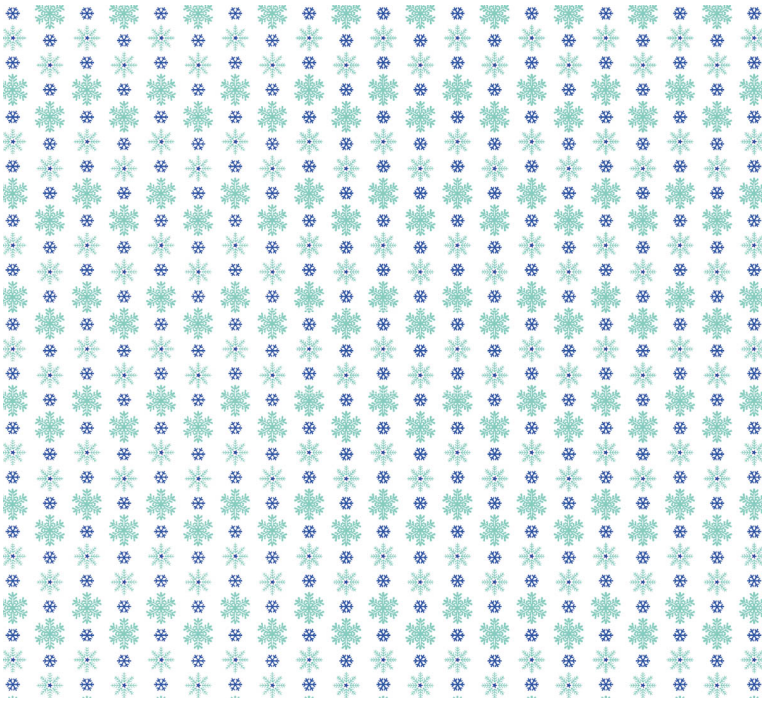
really little ones.

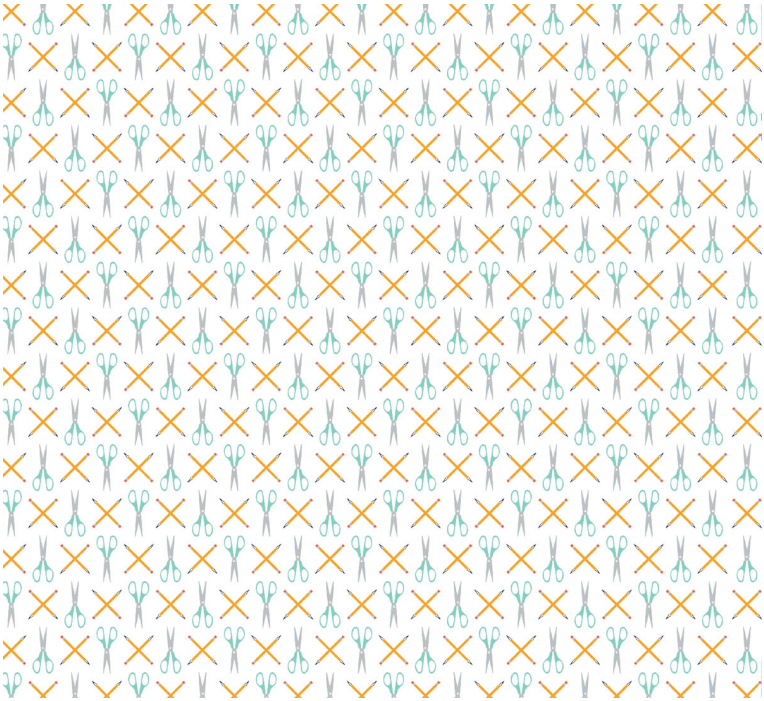
I feel that the process of crafting should be enjoyable and worry-free—don't try for perfection. Those little flaws add character, especially to holiday crafts that you may use for years to come, when you'll reminisce about when you and your kids made them. After all, the most important part of the holidays is spending time with friends and family.

So sit down with your hot chocolate or mulled cider and choose a project. Dig in—add your own flourishes, and don't be shy. Imagine the felt stocking trimmed in a colorful array of sequins or tiny white, red, and green rhinestones; picture the gift jar filled with the layered ingredients of your favorite family recipe for scones, chocolate chip cookies, or seven-layer bars. Over time, having made several gumdrop elves and holly trees, you might be inspired to create a gumdrop Mr. and Mrs. Claus. . . . The list goes on and on. What's important is that you and your family make these crafts together, and that they help you to celebrate special occasions.

Enjoy! And happy, happy holidays!

TIPS & TOOLS





TOOLS

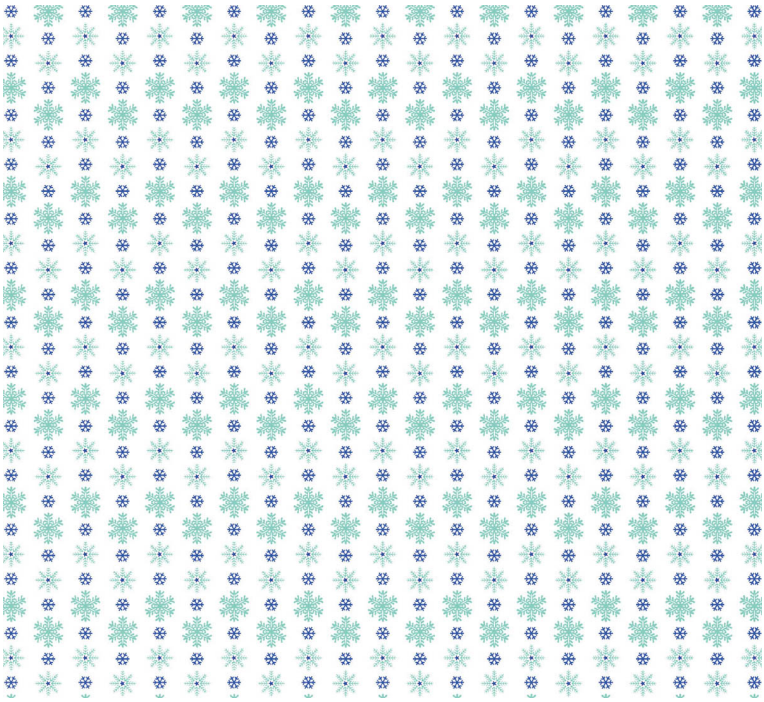
This small list contains the must-haves for creating the crafts within these pages; most projects in this book require at least one of them. (There are other items you'll need, but they will vary according to the project.) These are fairly common supplies. Be sure to check around the house before you run out and purchase them.

- X-Acto knife
- Micro-tip scissors and/or utility scissors
- Metal ruler (more versatile than wood or plastic, especially when working with wax)
- Pencil
- ¼-in/6-mm and ⅛-in/3-mm hole punches
- Nontoxic glue
- Stapler and staples
- Fabric chalk
- Double-sided tape
- Self-healing cutting mat

TIPS

- Make sure you have all the tools and equipment for the project before you begin.
- Photocopy or scan the project templates/diagrams so that you have multiples to use while crafting.
- Adult supervision is necessary for the baking and craft recipes in this book.
- Young children need adult assistance in crafts requiring knives, X-Acto knives, sharp scissors, and needles. Use caution.
- Working around a hot stove or oven can be dangerous. Always use oven mitts when handling pans or cookie sheets.
- Keep a stash of multicolored paper on hand so you can mix up the colors of the projects if you'd like.
- When crafting with more than one child, make sure there's enough of everything to go around. This will prevent arguments over tools or equipment.
- Use a worktable or cover your table in parchment or butcher paper to protect it from spills, glue, sharp blades, and the like.
- Don't overdo it. Tackling more than a couple of craft projects in a sitting might be pushing it, since children tend to get restless. You want to keep everyone interested and engaged.
- Use your imagination! For example, if you just need a bit of cellophane and you don't want to buy an entire roll, scavenge or buy a cellophane bag and trim it to size.

PROJECTS



CHANGING LEAVES
autumn wreath

If you love autumn and the changing colors of leaves, this is the craft for you. You can either go out and gather your own leaves or purchase them at your local florist or craft store. Remember, the more colors, the more beautiful the wreath!

MATERIALS (FOR ONE WREATH)

- Scissors
- Wax paper (optional)
- 2 to 3 dozen dried leaves, store bought or preserved at home using wax paper
- Iron and ironing board (optional)
- Cloth to cover ironing board (optional)
- Old towel or press cloth (optional)
- Circle cutter, 5 to 6-in/12 to 15-cm in diameter (optional)
- Paper plate, with at least a 10-in/25-cm diameter
- Stapler and staples
- 100 strands (a bundle) raffia in desired colors

MAKE YOUR OWN DRIED LEAVES (OPTIONAL)

1. Cut two pieces of wax paper large enough to create a 2-in/5-

cm border around the edges of the leaf to be preserved.

2. Cover your ironing board with a cloth and preheat the iron for dry medium heat. Place the leaf between the prepared pieces of wax paper and cover with the towel. Iron over the entire towel surface, moving the iron back and forth two or three times, so that the heat seals the wax paper onto the leaf.

3. Set the leaf aside for 3 to 5 minutes to cool and then trim the wax paper as close as possible to the leaf without cutting into it.

4. Repeat the process until you have enough leaves for your project.

ASSEMBLE THE WREATH

1. Using scissors or, if desired, the circle cutter, remove the center from the paper plate, leaving the rim intact. Turn the rim upside down.

2. To create a base for the leaves, staple raffia onto the plate rim until the surface is covered, working with a couple of strands at a time.

3. Arrange the leaves one over the other on the raffia-covered paper circle, stapling each leaf as you place it. Repeat until the wreath becomes a colorful ring of fall leaves.

4. Twist a few strands of raffia together to form a loop. Staple the ends securely to the inside of the plate to create a hanger.

5. Hang your wreath and enjoy the fall colors.

A HORN OF PLENTY

cornucopia centerpiece

Otherwise known as a "horn of plenty," a cornucopia makes an ideal centerpiece for your Thanksgiving table. Best of all, it can be customized to your family's liking. Use dried leaves and flowers; dried and fresh fruits, vegetables, and nuts; or anything that represents autumn for you.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE CENTERPIECE)

- Horn-shaped cornucopia basket
- Silver tray or plain white platter large enough to hold the basket
- 2 to 3 dozen large, colorful dried leaves

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES OF YOUR CHOICE:

- Fresh fruits such as persimmons, apples, oranges, grapes, and pears
- Dried fruits such as apricots, pears, cranberries, and blueberries
- Dried and fresh vegetables such as small gourds, acorn squash, pumpkins, and dried corn with or without husks
- Nuts in the shell such as walnuts, filberts, and almonds

TIP: You don't have to use all the fruits and vegetables listed above; buy what looks best, keeping the size of your basket in mind. Choose a variety of shapes and colors for your arrangement.

1. Place the basket on the tray. Cover the tray with the leaves, tucking them under the basket to create a nest for it and entirely hiding the tray from view.

2. Begin filling the basket with fruits and vegetables. Leave the softer, more perishable items for last. Small items such as nuts and berries look best sprinkled around the opening of the basket and on the leaves. Remember that a cornucopia is a symbol of abundance; it looks best when the items are literally falling out of the basket.

3. Place the completed basket in the center of your dining table.

MATTHEW

A SPECIAL PLACE FOR EVERYONE

fruit and veggie place cards

These easy-to-make place cards add a festive touch to your holiday table. Any seasonal fruits or vegetables will work, as long as they are small enough (about the size of an apple, persimmon, pear, or mini gourd) and have a stem for attaching the name tag. There are two versions—a card stock and a felt version. Enjoy either one!

MATERIALS (MAKES 2 PLACE CARDS PER SHEET OF CARD STOCK OR FELT)

- Seasonal fruits or vegetables the size of an apple, with stem intact
- Leaf Place Card Templates (see page 100)
- Card stock paper in fall colors such as orange, green, red, and brown
- Paper clip
- Micro-tip scissors
- Black marker
- Scallop scissors (optional)
- Glitter pen in a coordinating color
- Self-adhesive raised foam dots
- Hole punch (for Version 1 only)
- Colored raffia, ribbon, or string, cut into pieces 10-in/25 cm long
- Felt in fall colors (for Version 2 only)

- Nontoxic glue (for Version 2 only)

Choose a fruit or vegetable for each guest. Copy the leaf template. Proceed with either Version 1 or Version 2 below.

VERSION 1: CARD STOCK PLACE CARDS

1. Choose the color of card stock you want for the place cards. Attach the leaf templates to the card stock sheet with a paper clip. Using the micro-tip scissors, cut out the leaf shapes. Repeat the process until you have enough leaves for all your guests.

2. Draw veins on each leaf shape with the black marker, using your creativity and imagination.

3. Cut out strips of card stock in a pretty coordinating color (use scallop scissors for decorative edges, if desired).

   Write a guest's name on each strip and use a glitter pen to add flourishes. Attach foam dots to the backs of the decorated name strips and place one strip on each card leaf, centering it carefully.

4. Punch a hole in the top of each leaf and thread a piece of raffia, ribbon, or string through it. Tie the name card leaf to the stem of a fruit or vegetable, making sure that the name tag faces upward. Trim the ribbon ends, if needed.

VERSION 2: FELT AND CARD STOCK PLACE CARDS

1. Choose the color of card stock you want as a backing for the felt. Place the felt on the card stock and the template on the felt and fasten them together with a paper clip, creating a little sandwich of paper and felt.

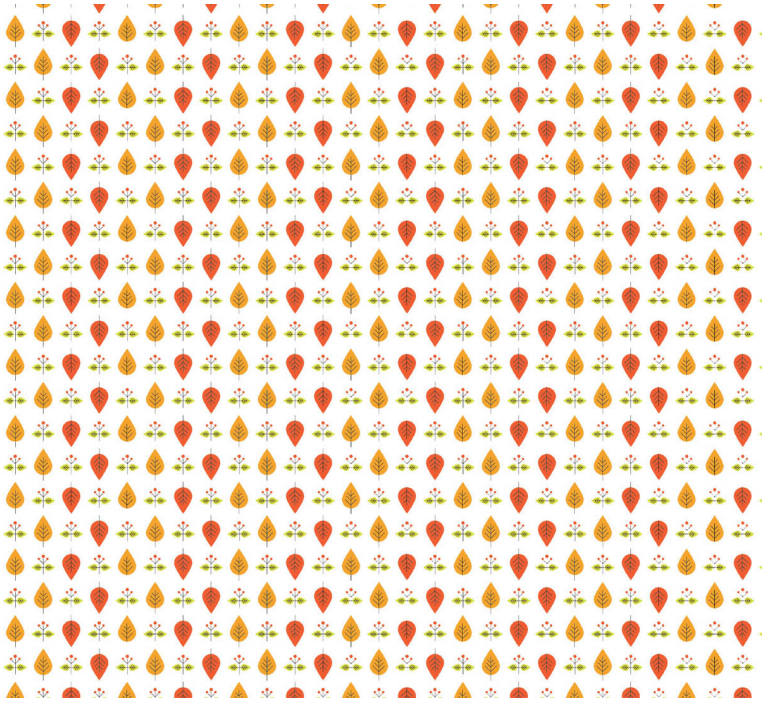
2. Using the micro-tip scissors, cut out the leaf shape. Repeat the

process until you have enough paper and felt leaf pairs for all your guests.

3. Glue each felt leaf to its card stock back and let dry. Using a glitter pen, draw veins on the felt leaf.

4. Cut out strips of card stock in a pretty coordinating color (use scallop scissors for decorative edges, if desired). Write a guest's name on each strip and use a glitter pen to add flourishes. Attach foam dots to the backs of the decorated name strips and place one strip on each felt leaf, centering it carefully.

5. Fold the top tip of the completed leaf in half and, using scissors, make a small slit. Thread a piece of raffia, ribbon, or string through the slit. Tie the name card leaf to the stem of a fruit or vegetable, making sure that the name faces upward. Trim the ribbon ends, if needed.



LET IT SNOW!

paper snowflakes

Made with tissue or paper in wintry blues and whites, and accented with glitter if you choose, these special snowflakes can be placed anywhere—on windows, the refrigerator, doors, and mirrors. The sky's the limit when creating a winter wonderland!

MATERIALS

- Paper Snowflake Diagram (see page 102)
- Tissue or plain paper in various shades of white and blue
- Micro-tip or other sharp scissors
- Old newspaper or scrap paper
- Repositionable spray adhesive

TIP: If using tissue paper, be gentle with it.

1. Cut the paper into various sizes of squares, from 10-in/25 cm to 3-in/7.5 cm on a side. If you are using tissue paper, use a double thickness for each square, for durability.

2. Fold the top left corner of a paper square down over the bottom right corner, creating a triangle (A).

3. Fold the triangle diagonally again, bringing the top right point down to bottom left and aligning the edges (B).

4. Fold the left side in halfway and then the right side all the way over it so the long edges align—the short side of the triangle will be a bit ragged (C).

5. Using the scissors, cut a straight line along this side, so that the edge is even (D).

6. Use your imagination to cut curves, fancy edges, triangles, and other shapes along both folded edges of the triangle and at the short edge.

7. Working very carefully, unfold the paper to reveal the snowflake (you will have two if you used tissue paper).

8. Lay a few sheets of old newspaper or scrap paper on a flat surface and then arrange the snowflakes on top, making sure they do not overlap.

9. Following the directions on the can of spray adhesive, apply a very light, even coating over the snowflakes. Let dry for about 5 minutes (or as long as indicated on the label).

10. Carefully peel the snowflakes off the scrap paper and mount them on a window, the fridge, or any surface that the adhesive instructions list as suitable.

    TIP: To make sure the adhesive is safe for the surface you want to decorate, spray a tiny piece of your paper, press it on, and then remove it (most surfaces are accepting of the adhesive, but it's best to check). Also, be aware that on surfaces that get a lot of direct sun the adhesive may stick more tightly than on surfaces that stay cool.

JINGLING STUFFERS

wrapped quarter rolls

Kids love these playfully wrapped rolls of quarters! They make wonderful gifts for Hanukkah or stocking stuffers for Christmas. Mix and match colors to correspond to the holiday or jazz up the wrapping with colorful ribbon and stickers.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE ROLL OF QUARTERS)

- Wrapping paper, cut into a piece about 4 in/10 cm square
- Roll of quarters
- Transparent or double-sided tape
- Cellophane, cut into a strip about 3 in by 7 in/7.5 cm by 18 cm
- 2 pieces of thin ribbon or yarn, each at least 15 in/38 cm long
- Gift tag or label

1. Lay the wrapping paper on a flat surface, place a roll of quarters at the bottom edge of the paper, and roll it so that the paper wraps around it. Use a small length of the tape to secure the paper on the roll.

2. Fold each end neatly, making pleats like the ones you see on the roll of quarters; secure each end with tape. Next, place the wrapped roll at the wide edge of the cellophane strip and roll again, taping the edge as before but leaving the ends open.

3. Gather each end together and tie it securely with a piece of ribbon; depending upon the ribbon (or yarn) used, tie a bow or make a knot and curl the loose ends with scissors. Attach a gift tag to each roll, positioning it so that it hides the taped edge.

TISSUE PAPER VARIATION

TIP: Since tissue paper is thin, it is best to use at least double layers, if not more. Roll carefully, so as to not tear the paper.

Follow the directions above, using tissue paper instead of wrapping paper. Choose bright colors like orange, red, green, and purple. For Hanukkah, use blue and white or silver. Use double-sided tape to secure the rolled paper. After wrapping the roll in cellophane, tie the ends with thin ribbon or yarn.

USING STICKERS

TIP: This is a fun project for kids under four.

Provide a large selection of colorful holiday-themed stickers. Either omit the wrapping paper so that the kids can cover the roll entirely with stickers before putting on the cellophane, or make the tissue paper variation and have them put a few stickers on the finished wrapping.

100

HOLIDAY OF LIGHT

beeswax candles

Light represents the eternal flame celebrated during Hanukkah, and these homemade candles are sure to add a special touch to any holiday gathering. Made of rolled beeswax and sprinkled with silvery glitter, they make great gifts for friends and family!

MATERIALS (FOR 48 CANDLES)

- X-Acto knife or kitchen knife
- Metal ruler
- Self-healing cutting mat
- 3 beeswax sheets (8 by 16 in/20 by 40.5 cm), in shades of blue for Hanukkah or colors of choice for other holidays
- 6 yd/5.5 m cotton square braid candlewick, size 3/0, cut into 4½-in/11-cm lengths
- Paper plate
- Nonflammable glitter for Hanukkah, or color of choice for other holidays
- Sheet of tissue paper or parchment paper
- Length of ribbon

1. Using the X-Acto or a kitchen knife, ruler, and cutting mat, cut a beeswax sheet lengthwise in half. Cut each half into eight

rectangles 2 in/5 cm long and 4 in/10 cm wide.

2. Place a beeswax rectangle on a clean, flat working surface; roll one long edge up a little. Tear off a small piece of wax–about ¼ to ½ in/6 to 12 mm–from one end of the rolled-up edge; set the piece aside.

3. Lay a piece of wick in the rolled-up space, with the end about ¼ in/6 mm from the torn corner (which will be at the bottom of the candle). Starting with the wick edge and applying even pressure, gently roll the wax around the wick to create your candle (it's easiest to roll away from yourself).

4. Position the candle seam-side down on the work surface and roll the candle lightly a couple of times to bind the edge. Smooth out the seam with a fingertip for a cleaner look.

5. Wrap the torn-off piece of wax around the top of the wick, where it meets the candle. Press the wax in place and smooth it down so it covers the wick as evenly as possible; this will help the candle burn when lit.

6. Set completed candles to the side and continue rolling until all the candles have been made.

7. Place the paper plate on your work space. Roll a candle between your palms to soften the wax slightly. Holding the candle by the wick at an angle over the plate, sprinkle it with glitter, turning it to coat it evenly. Shake off the excess glitter and set the candle aside. Repeat with the rest of the candles.

8. Shake the candles once more over the plate to remove excess glitter. Then wrap them in tissue or parchment paper and tie them with a ribbon to contain the glitter until you are ready to use them.

9. Before using the candles, trim the wicks to about ¼ in/6 mm and mold the bottom of each candle to fit into your menorah

or candleholder.

10. Enjoy the sparkle and dazzle!

    TIP: For a full set of Hanukkah candles, you will need 44 rolled beeswax candles in total. A combination of blues looks spectacular.

SWEET 'N' CRUNCHY matzo bark

There's something about the salty, bland taste of matzo mixed with good bittersweet chocolate that makes this holiday treat addictive. You might want to double (or even triple) the recipe!

MATERIALS

- Cookie sheet
- 4 pieces plain matzo, broken into 2-to-3-in/5-to-7.5-cm pieces
- Parchment paper
- Aluminum foil
- Medium saucepan
- ½ cup/113 g (1 stick) unsalted butter
- ½ cup/110 g brown sugar
- Double boiler
- ¾ cup/150 g coarsely chopped high-quality bittersweet chocolate (70 percent cocoa)
- Rubber spatula
- ½ cup/60 g slivered almonds (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F/220°C/gas 7.

2. On a cookie sheet, toast the matzo pieces for 6 to 8 minutes, or until they are obviously more golden and crispy. Transfer the matzo to a plate to cool.

3. Line the cookie sheet with a single piece of parchment paper and place a piece of foil on top of that. Make sure both layers completely cover the cookie sheet.

4. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter and sugar over low heat. Let cook for 2 minutes.

5. Meanwhile, in a double boiler, melt the chocolate. When the chocolate is melted, pour the butter mixture into the chocolate and stir until blended.

6. Arrange the matzo evenly over the lined cookie sheet and use a rubber spatula to drizzle the chocolate mixture over it, taking care to coat all the matzo pieces. The matzo should be completely covered in a thin layer of chocolate. Sprinkle with nuts, if desired.

7. Place the cookie sheet in the refrigerator for at least an hour, until the chocolate has hardened completely. Cut the bark into squares and remove all the foil. Arrange the pieces on a plate and serve.

   TIP: Matzo bark will keep for a week in the refrigerator.

DREIDEL, DREIDEL, DREIDEL

garland of lights

This crafty string of lights is a wonderful way to get kids involved with decorating for the Holiday of Light. This project requires time and patience, as it is quite detailed–nimble hands make easier work of it–but the results are well worth it! It should take you around two hours.

MATERIALS (FOR A TEN-DREIDEL GARLAND)

- Dreidel Garland Template (see page 103)
- 10 pieces card stock in blue and silver or white
- Scissors or X-Acto knife
- ¼-in/6-mm hole punch
- ⅛-in/3-mm hole punch
- Hebrew letters template (see page 102)
- Marking pen in metallic blue, silver, or black (for Lettering Option 1)
- Glue pen (for Lettering Option 2)
- Paper plate
- Glitter (for Lettering Option 2)
- Clean, fine paintbrush
- Clear-drying glue

- String of clear lights (a 10- to 20-light strand of white lights works best)

CUT OUT THE DREIDELS

1. Copy the dreidel template and trace it onto card stock. Using scissors or the X-Acto knife, cut out a dreidel from the card stock. Fold along the lines to create the shape, folding the tabs as well.

2. Repeat this process to make ten dreidels.

   TIP: To save time, you may want to cut out multiple copies of the dreidel at once. Stack a few pieces of card stock together, paper clip the template on top, and cut, leaving extra allowance around the template. Fine-tune the shape of each dreidel one at a time.

3. Using a larger hole punch, make a hole in the center of the top panel.

4. Use the smaller hole punch to create a pattern of lines on the dreidel. Make four holes across each side about a third of the way from the top.

MAKE THE HEBREW LETTERS (LETTERING OPTIONS 1 AND 2)

OPTION 1: Using your marking pen of choice and, referring to the lettering template, write Hebrew letters across the sides of the dreidel.

OPTION 2: Follow the instructions for Option 1 but use the glue pen. While the glue is still wet, hold the dreidel over the paper plate and sprinkle glitter on top. Shake off the excess and then let dry. Use the fine paintbrush to brush off any loose glitter that remains.

TIP: You may want to practice writing the letters on scraps of paper and, if you are using glitter, test it with the glue pen before working on the

dreidels.

ASSEMBLE THE DREIDELS AND GARLAND

1. If you used glitter, discard any that remains on the paper plate and remove it from the paintbrush. Pour a small amount of glue on the plate. Using the brush, dab glue on the three tabs of the top edge piece, as well as the far left tab.

2. Start folding with the inside edge tab and work your way out, stopping when you have folded and glued the sides and top. You will have created a box, or a dreidel with an open bottom. Set it aside to dry. Repeat with all the dreidels.

   TIP: Be delicate when applying the glue; you don't need a lot, just enough to hold the dreidel together. Use your thumb and index finger to apply momentary pressure to the tabs after gluing.

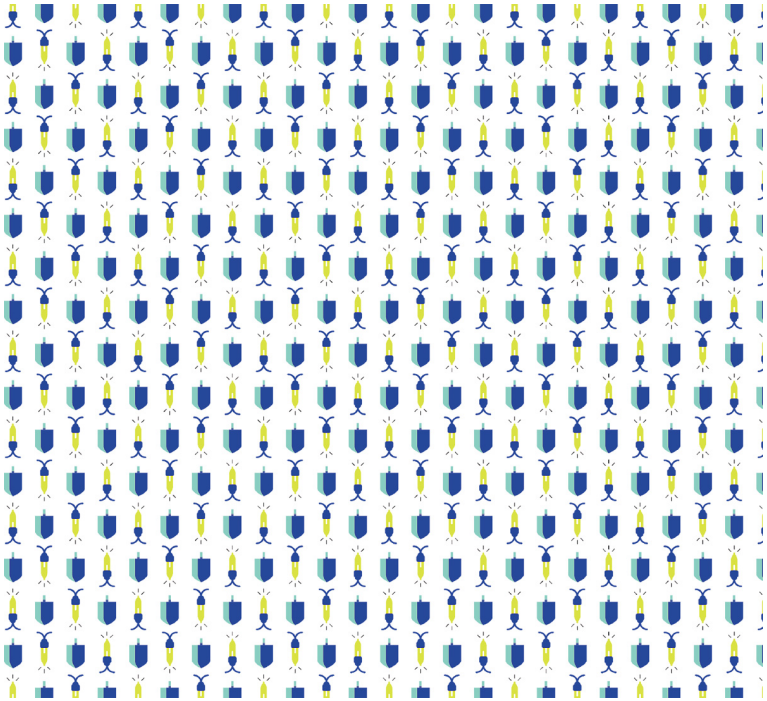
3. Use a similar process to close the bottom of the dreidel: Brush glue on the four remaining tabs. Fold, starting at the side with two tabs. When you have folded the last tab in and glued them all down to create a point, set the dreidel aside to dry. Repeat for all dreidels.

4. Using scissors or the X-Acto, make four small notches around the hole at the top of each dreidel. Hold the dreidel upside down at the corner and push the lightbulb stem halfway through, being very careful to not crack the dreidel open.

   TIP: You want to see the bulb through the small holes punched at the top of the dreidel.

5. Continue along the strand of lights, skipping one or two lights, depending on the length of the strand. After attaching all the dreidels, carefully hang the garland and plug it in. The light should shine out from the holes in the sides, and the letters should sparkle, if glittered.

CAUTION: Be careful to not leave these lights on too long at one time.



HAY
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CANDY RICHES

dreidel stuffed with gelt

These easy-to-make stuffed dreidels are a favorite of mine. The blue felt or silk paired with silver organza and blue ribbon makes for a charming little gift. I usually fill the dreidel with chocolate coins or blue M&Ms mixed with white Jordan almonds. Of course, they can be filled with whatever candy you like—just stick with silver, white, and blue if you want to keep with the holiday theme.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE POUCH)

- Pencil or marker
- Stuffed Dreidel Template (see page 104)
- Paper to make pattern from template
- Scissors
- 2 yd/1.8 m silver organza or similar sheer fabric
- 2 yd/1.8 m blue felt or fabric such as silk
- Straight pins
- Thick, strong thread, 42 to 45 in/107 to 114 cm long, in blue or white
- Large-eyed sewing needle
- Scallop scissors or pinking shears
- Silver foil chocolate coins or candy of your choice
- Ribbon, ½ to 1 in/12 to 25 cm wide and 6 in/15 cm long

1. Using a pencil or marker, copy the template onto the paper and cut it out.

2. Place the organza on top of the blue fabric; secure the template to both fabric layers with pins, and cut the dreidel out, leaving a little room around the edges.

3. Remove the pattern paper and pin the two fabrics back together.

4. Thread the sewing needle and make 1-in-/2.5-cm-long running stitches around the sides and bottom of the dreidel, leaving only the very top open. Tie off and cut the excess thread when you've finished sewing.

   TIP: You can also use a sewing machine for this step—or even simplify the project by using a stapler.

5. Trim the edges with scallop scissors or pinking shears.

6. Fill the dreidel with chocolate coins or candy.

7. Using the ribbon, tie the top closed. Make a tight bow, trimming the ends if they seem too long.

Cool Christmas Brownies
Preheat oven to 350 degrees
Grease a 9 x 9 pan
Melt & cool 1 stick, (1/2 cup) butter, add 2
lightly beaten eggs to butter. Gently add
contents from jar until just combined.
Spread in prepared pan & bake,
for up to 35 minutes (less for gooey!).
Enjoy with a cool glass of milk or
mini cocoa!

BROWNIE GIFT JAR

brownie fixings layered in a jar with recipe

Nothing says "holiday" like baking, and cool mint gives these brownies an extra wintry nip. Giving jars of brownie mix as presents means the recipients get in on the action, too! Consider using this idea for other recipes and holidays throughout the year.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE JAR)

- 32-oz/950-ml wide-mouth glass canning jar, such as Ball brand
- 1¼ cups/175 g all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp/3 g salt
- 1 tsp/4.5 g baking powder
- Sheet of paper
- ¾ cup/65 g good-quality cocoa powder, unsweetened
- Paper towel
- ⅔ cup/134 g white sugar
- ⅔ cup/98 g packed brown sugar
- 1 cup/240 g mint chocolate chips
- ½ cup/60 g walnut pieces
- 3½-in/9-cm square cream card stock, edges cut with scallop scissors (if desired)

- Colorful marker or pen
- Clear-drying glue
- 4-in/10-cm square green card stock
- Scallop scissors (optional)
- Hole punch
- Thin ribbon or string
- Wide holiday-striped or pretty satin ribbon

1. Make certain that the jar is clean and dry. Combine the flour with the salt and baking powder and place the mixture in the bottom of the jar.

   TIP: For cleaner lines between ingredients, make sure to pack each layer down after adding each ingredient, tapping the jar on a counter and using the back of a spoon, if necessary.

2. Form the sheet of paper into a cone and use it as a funnel as you slowly add the cocoa powder. Shake it gently so it settles well, and then wipe any residual powder from the sides of the jar with a paper towel before moving on.

3. Add the white sugar to the jar and then the brown sugar, shaking or packing each into a level layer. Finally, add the mint chocolate chips and walnuts. Close the lid firmly to make a tight seal.

4. Write the recipe on the cream card stock, using the color pen of your choice:

5. Glue the cream card stock onto the green card stock, centering it evenly, and trim with scallop scissors, if desired. Punch a hole at the top, thread thin ribbon or string through it, and tie the tag to the neck of the jar, just below the lid.

6. Wrap wide satin ribbon around the top of the jar for a pretty

presentation.

TIP: If desired, the recipe can be typed on the computer and printed directly onto card stock. This will allow you to use much smaller cards, if you wish.

COOL CHRISTMAS BROWNIES

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas 4.

2. Grease a 9-in/23-cm square pan.

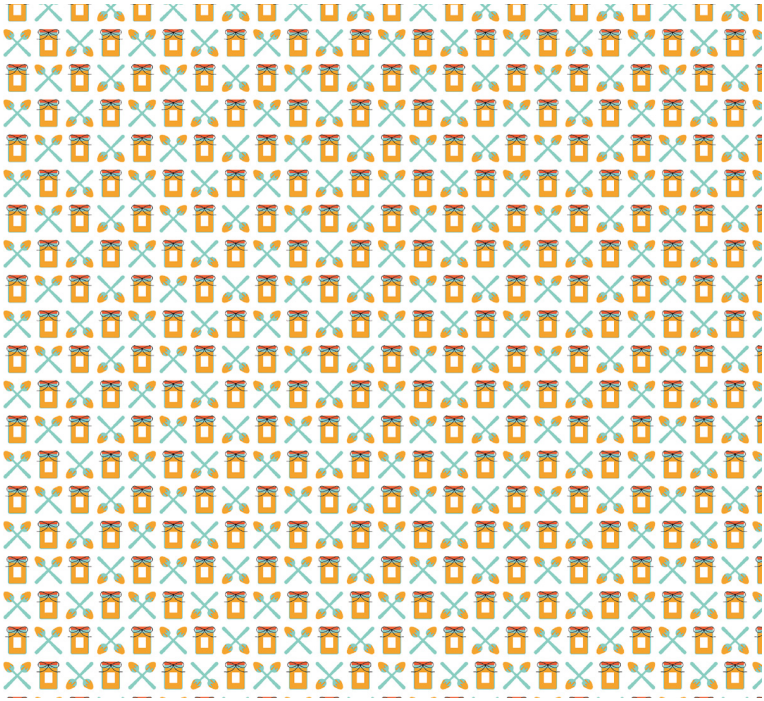
3. Melt and cool 1 stick (½ cup)/113 g butter.

4. Stir in 2 lightly beaten eggs.

5. Gently mix in the contents of the jar until just combined.

6. Spread in prepared pan and bake for 35 minutes (slightly less if you like them gooey).

7. Enjoy with a cool glass of milk or hot mint cocoa!



MAGIC ICE

pipe cleaner and borax snowflakes that grow

Mix a little bit of science with holiday crafting in this creative project! Kids can actually HJL watch their snowflakes grow overnight! It's so cool that they'll want to make these all season long. Add color to the mix to make the snowflakes even more beautiful. Adult supervision is suggested for this craft.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE SNOWFLAKE)

- 12-in/30-cm white pipe cleaner, cut into three equal pieces
- Scissors
- 24-oz/710-ml wide-mouth jar
- Short length of kitchen string
- Pencil long enough to lie across the opening of the jar
- Boiling water
- 6 tbsp/74 g borax such as 20 Mule Team Borax laundry booster (borax soap won't work) or kosher salt (Kosher works better for some mysterious chemical reason)
- Food coloring (optional)

1. Twist two pieces of the pipe cleaner together in the middle to make an X and then add the third piece, attaching it to the

center of the X to make a six-pointed snowflake framework.

2. Using scissors, trim the ends of the snowflake so it fits in the jar; there should be a little extra room on either side. Tie one end of the string to an arm of the snowflake. Tie the other end to the pencil, making sure that, when the snowflake hangs in the jar, held up by the pencil, it does not touch the bottom. Set the snowflake aside.

3. Carefully fill the jar with boiling water, leaving a little room at the top. Add a heaping spoonful of borax or salt (one or the other—not both) and stir until it dissolves. Repeat this addition until you can no longer get the borax or salt to dissolve.

   TIP: At this point, your solution is supersaturated. It should take about 3 tbsp/37 grams borax per 1 cup/240 ml water. Kosher salt is more variable and takes about 5 tbsp/55 grams for the same amount of water.

4. Once the solution is supersaturated, stir in a small amount of food coloring to tint the snowflake, if you wish. Blue adds a lovely natural hue.

5. Lower the snowflake into the jar and lay the pencil across the top of the jar to hold it up. The snowflake should not touch the bottom, and there should be room on all sides. Put the jar in a location where it won't be moved and leave it overnight.

   In the morning, check to see how much it has grown. Borax will grow into a snowflake overnight, but the salt version will need at least a few days. It helps to leave the jar in a sunny location so the water will evaporate. Keep the snow-flake in the solution until its appearance pleases you.

6. Remove the snowflake from the jar and allow it to dry completely. Untie it from the pencil and hang it in a window or on a tree to catch the light.

JUST FOR YOU

paper holiday gift tags

Homemade gift tags add a special touch to any present. These Christmas-themed tags come in four different shapes and can be used for every gift under the tree! Best of all, they are super easy to make.

MATERIALS (FOR SIX GIFT TAGS; THREE OF EACH TYPE)

- Scissors
- Metal ruler
- 2 sheets brown card stock, 8½ by 11 in/21.5 by 28 cm
- Gift Tag Templates (see pages 106–107)
- 1 sheet each green and red card stock, 8½ by 11 in/21.5 by 28 cm
- Pencil
- Scraps of construction paper in multiple colors
- ⅛-in/3-mm hole punch
- Self-adhesive foam dots, ¼-in/6 mm or smaller
- Glue pen or craft glue
- Gold string ribbon
- Fine-point black marker
- Glitter (optional)

- ¼-in/6-mm hole punch
- Bright red or green holiday ribbon

1. Using the scissors and ruler, cut the brown card stock into three 4-in/10-cm squares and three 4-by-5-in/10-by-12-cm rectangles; set aside.

2. Copy the tree template and trace the shape onto the green card stock, using pencil. Cut out three tree shapes; set aside.

3. Cut the red card stock into six 3½-in/9-cm squares; set aside.

4. Choose a few pieces of colorful construction paper and, using the smaller hole punch, punch out six to ten little circles in various colors for each gift tag. Set these aside.

MAKE THE TREE GIFT TAGS

1. Lay a brown rectangle on your work surface so that the short end is toward you. Attach a red square toward the top of the page using foam dots. Center the tree in the middle of the red card and attach it.

2. Using the glue pen or glue, attach the gold string ribbon, zigzagging it across the tree to create a garland effect. Use scissors to trim the ribbon at the edges of the tree.

3. Glue the tiny circles made with the hole punch onto the tree so they look like ornaments. Repeat to make the other tree tags.

MAKE THE GARLAND GIFT TAGS

1. Attach a red square to the top of a brown square, using foam dots and centering it so that there's an even border of brown on all sides.

2. Using the glue pen or glue, attach gold string ribbon in a zigzag pattern across the red card stock, creating a garland effect. Use scissors to trim the ribbon at the edges.

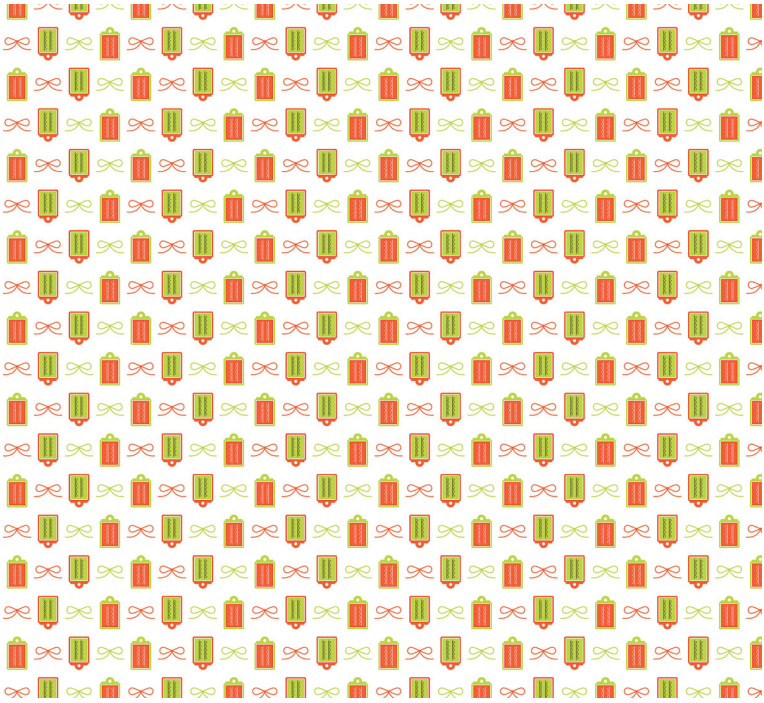
3. Use glue or the glue pen to attach the tiny circles to the red square. Position them just below the gold garland so they look like hanging ornaments or bulbs. Using a black marker, draw lines connecting the ornaments to the gold ribbon.

FINISH THE GIFT TAGS

1. If desired, add glitter to the ornaments on both types of tag by dabbing a little glue on top of them and dusting them with glitter in a desired color. Allow the tags to dry completely before continuing.

2. Using the larger hole punch, make a hole at the top of the brown card stock. Thread the holiday ribbon through the hole, cross the ribbon, and tie it (if you'd like to make a knot, that's fine). Now it is ready to attach to a gift.

   NOTE: To make the gift tags using the other template shapes provided, follow the instructions for placing the red card stock on top of the brown. On your choice of card stock, trace one of the other templates (gingerbread man, snowman, or holly), then cut it out and center it within the red square. After the shape is attached, decorate it as you wish.



CHRISTMAS CANDY POPS

gumdrop elves and holly

These holiday gumdrop candy pops are sure to be a hit with the kids. They make great party favors, too. I've provided instructions for an elf and a holly bush, but after a bit of practice, you'll be able to create a Santa, snowman, Christmas tree, or anything else you want.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE ELF AND ONE HOLLY BUSH)

FOR THE ELF

- 2 large green gumdrops
- Candy stick (lollipop stick)
- 1 large white gumdrop
- 2 small green gumdrops
- 1 white mini gumdrop
- 4 toothpicks
- 3 green jelly beans
- 2 soft black licorice drops
- 2 small red gumdrops
- Candy sprinkles
- Black or red string licorice

FOR THE HOLLY BUSH

- Candy stick (lollipop stick)
- 4 to 6 spearmint candy leaves
- 3 to 4 small red gumdrops

MAKE AN ELF

1. Thread the large green gumdrops, flattened sides together, onto the stick to form a body.

2. Add the large white gumdrop as a head. Place the smaller green gumdrops as a hat, topping them off with a white mini gumdrop.

3. To make each leg, carefully push a toothpick through one jelly bean and one licorice drop. Attach each leg to the body.

4. Cut a toothpick and the remaining jelly bean in half cross-wise and thread a jelly bean half, along with a small red gumdrop, onto the toothpick piece to make an arm. Attach it to the upper part of the body. Repeat for the other arm.

5. Use a toothpick to poke small holes in the head for eyes and nose. Press sprinkles in the holes, creating the face. Gently poke a curve on the face in the shape of a smile. Press a small piece of licorice string into the curve.

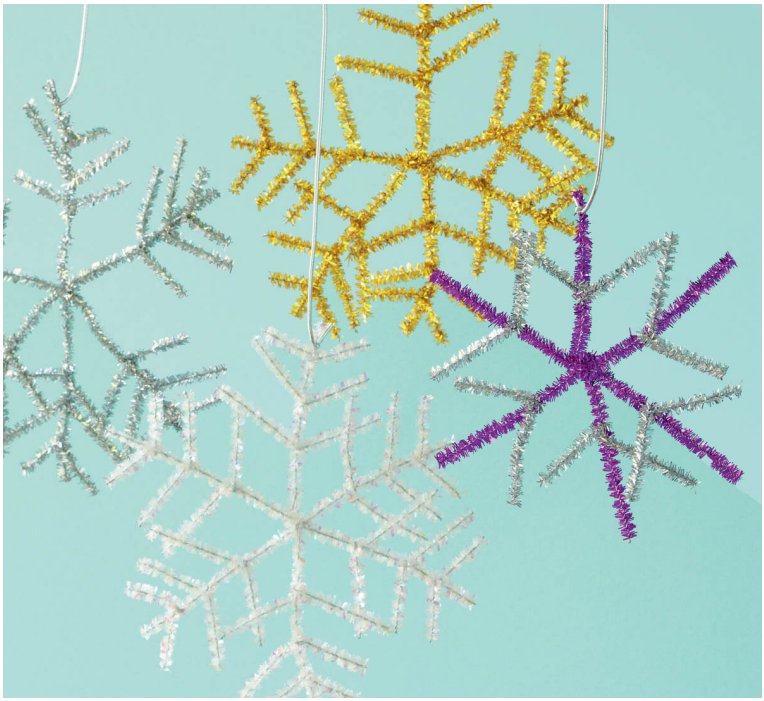
6. Cut a 6-in/15-cm piece of licorice string and tie it around the elf's neck as a scarf.

MAKE A HOLLY BUSH

1. Thread the spearmint candy leaves onto the candy stick.

2. Cut the red gumdrops into pieces to make holly berries; press

the cut sides of the gumdrop berries onto the leaves to make the berries stick.



SHIMMERING SNOWFLAKES

pipe cleaner ornaments in silver and gold

You can make these pretty snowflakes as simple or complex as you like. To make them smaller or larger, simply adjust the length of your pipe cleaners to the size and design of your snowflake. For a more traditional look, use white pipe cleaners or add some pizzazz by using multicolored ones. Hang them in the window, off the mantel, or on the tree! The diagram (page 116) will help you with the simple process, but once you begin, it becomes rudimentary.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE SNOWFLAKE)

- Pipe Cleaner Snowflake Diagram (see page 105)
- 6 silver or gold pipe cleaners (each 12 in/30 cm long), cut into the following lengths:
    - 3 pieces 6 in/15 cm long
    - 6 pieces 3 in/7.5 cm long
    - 6 pieces 2½ in/6 cm long
    - 6 pieces 2 in/5 cm long
    - Needle-nose pliers
- Sharp scissors or wire cutters
- Piece of silver or gold Christmas metallic elastic wrapping cord about 10 in/25 cm long

1. Join the three long pieces of pipe cleaner by twisting the centers together and then stretching the spokes out. This will create a six-pointed star. To be sure that the pipe cleaners are

securely attached, press the twisted area with the needle-nose pliers.

2. Begin the spoke design by taking a 3-inch/7.5-cm piece of pipe cleaner, placing it midway on one of the arms, and wrapping it around the arm so that the pieces cross. Make sure each spoke projects an equal distance on e ither side of the arm; if necessary, trim the ends with scissors. Secure with pliers. Repeat with the rest of the arms to create all six spokes.

3. Repeat the process above with the next-longest pieces, positioning them slightly above the first set of spokes.

4. Finally, repeat the process a third time with the remaining pieces, adding them near the tips of the arms.

5. When you're ready to hang the snowflake, wrap a piece of cord around one of the arms, and then gather the cord to the back and tie the ends to make a loop.

WRAP IT UP

hand-printed gift wrap

It's delightful to open a gift that somebody has carefully wrapped for you, and a gift wrapped in hand-printed paper is even more special. This project uses a potato for the stamp, which is fun and inexpensive. As you decide on a shape for your stamp, it's important to keep things fairly simple; a Christmas tree, candy cane, wreath, and candle all work well. I've included templates to get you started, but the possibilities are endless!

MATERIALS

- Large roll of butcher paper or supply of white poster paper
- Masking tape
- Large baking potatoes
- Pencil
- Gift Wrap Templates (optional; see pages 108–109)
- Small sharp knife or X-Acto knife
- Acrylic paints in a variety of colors, including gold and silver
- Plastic or paper plates (1 for each color of paint used)
- Paintbrushes
- Glitter (optional)

1. Cut the paper to the size you want and tape it to the floor with masking tape.

2. Cut a potato in half. Draw the simple shape you'd like to print onto the potato half using a pencil; refer to the templates or use your imagination.

3. Using the knife, generously cut around the shape you drew. Then go back and carefully trim away the excess so that the printing surface is approximately ¼ in/6 mm higher than the surrounding areas. This will make it easier to stamp the surface multiple times with each application of paint.

   TIP: Make sure to cut along the edges as cleanly as possible, to ensure smooth lines when stamping.

4. Pour a small amount of the paint color that you want to use onto a plate. Using a brush, apply the paint onto the printing surface of your potato stamp, covering the area lightly and evenly; do not drench it with paint.

5. Press the potato stamp onto the paper and remove it without smearing the imprint. You can use the stamp several times before reapplying the paint. If you choose to change colors, wash and dry the potato stamp before applying the new color.

6. If you want to add glitter, sprinkle it onto the paper while the paint is still wet. Use glitter sparingly, however; if there's too much, it will fall off as you handle the paper and get all over everything.

7. Let the paper dry for at least a couple of hours before wrapping your gifts.

A RAINBOW OF GREEN AND RED

christmas star garland

Deck the halls, windows, walls, stairway—the entire house—with these four- and five-point stars. You can hang them individually or string them together as a garland. The red and green colors make them extra festive for Christmas. The diagram (pages 108–109) will help to clarify the folding process; it's a good idea to practice with scrap paper before moving on to your chosen paper.

MATERIALS

- Four- and Five-Point-Star Diagrams (see pages 110–111)
- Construction paper in shades of red and green, cut into squares of various sizes, such as 4 in/10 cm and 6 in/15 cm
- Sharp or micro-tip scissors
- Small hole punch
- Pretty ribbon, ¼ to ½ in/6 mm to 12 mm wide, cut to desired lengths for hanging stars singly or left long to make a garland

MAKE A FOUR-POINT STAR

1. Following the diagram on page 110, take a square of paper and fold it in half, creating a rectangle (A). Place the rectangle on a flat surface with the crease at the top and the open end at the bottom.

2. Create a triangle by folding the two top corners down and toward the center, meeting in the middle (B).

3. Fold the left corner over to meet the right corner, creating a smaller triangle (C).

4. Using the scissors, make a diagonal cut from near the top of the long side of the triangle to just below the midpoint of the left edge (D). Unfold the paper (E), and there's your star!

MAKE A FIVE-POINT STAR

1. Following the diagram on page 111, take a square of paper and fold it in half, creating a rectangle (A). Place the rectangle on a flat surface with the crease at the top and the open end at the bottom.

2. Bring the top right corner to the left edge of the rectangle, about a third of the way up from the lower left corner, creating overlap on the bottom (B).

3. Fold the top left corner over the upper edge (C). Using the top point as reference, fold the paper in half vertically (D). Cut from the upper part of the folded right edge down to the middle of the left folded edge, above the inside fold (D).

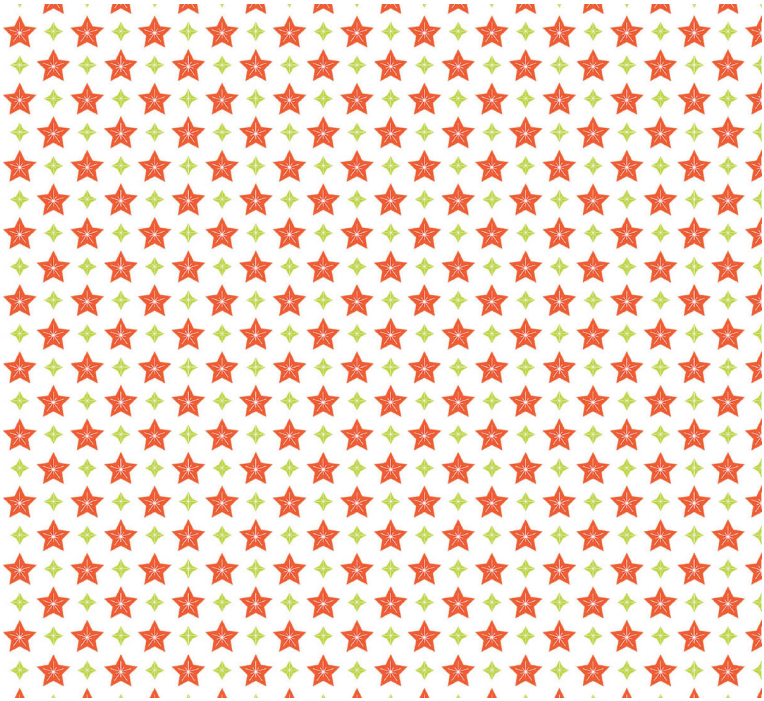
   Be sure to cut above that inside fold; otherwise, one point of the star will be flat-tipped when the paper is unfolded. If this happens, refold the star and trim it down to create a sharp point. Unfold the paper, and you have your star (E)!

HANG YOUR STARS

1. To hang stars singly, punch a hole in one of the points, thread a piece of ribbon through, and tie it into a loop.

2. If you want to create a garland, make several stars, punch

holes in the points, and thread a long piece of ribbon through the holes. If you are using thin ribbon, tie loose knots to hold each finished star in place, spacing them out evenly.



YUMMY GARLAND

popcorn and cranberry strands

For this traditional holiday craft, you will turn an abundance of dried cranberries and popcorn into a festive, delicate garland to drape on the tree. The whole family can make these garlands together—it may just become part of your holiday tradition.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE 5- TO 5½-FT/1.52- TO 1.68-M GARLAND)

- 5¾ to 6 ft/1.73 to 1.83 m heavy thread or dental floss
- Sturdy, large-eyed needle
- 3 big bowls full (about 18 cups/4.25 L) freshly popped popcorn (without butter)
- 6 oz/170 g dried cranberries

1. Thread the needle. Carefully push the needle through a cranberry, folding or doubling it, if necessary; repeat two to four times. Then switch to popcorn, making sure to insert the needle through a thicker part of the kernel. Alternate groups of three to five popcorn kernels and three to five cranberries.

2. When the strand is nearly full, tie it off with a big, tight knot. Your garland is ready to drape on the tree.

SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

elf drink stirrers

These adorable green helpers make it even more fun to sip a hot chocolate or hot vanilla. Kids like to make their little elves unique, so encourage them to put their own finishing touches on each stirrer. You can mix up the flavor of candy cane as well—in addition to peppermint, try raspberry or orange.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE ELF)

- Elf Drink Stirrer Template (see page 112)
- Felt scraps in light and dark green, black, red, and white
- Fabric chalk
- Scissors
- Nontoxic glue
- Wiggle eyes (¼ in/6 mm)
- 1 red mini pom-pom, ⅛ in/3 mm
- 2 white mini pom-poms, ¼ in/6 mm
- Gold glitter or glitter pen
- Awl
- 2-in/5-cm piece thin green gardening wire
- Candy cane, in flavor of choice
- Wire cutters

- Transparent tape
- Red or black licorice

1. Copy the elf template and cut out the various parts. Place the template for the base on a piece of light green felt, the belt on black felt, the face on white felt, the hands on red felt, and the hat trim on dark green felt. Trace around each one with the chalk and use scissors to cut out the shapes.

2. Arrange the felt pieces to create the elf. Glue the pieces down using nontoxic glue.

3. Working freehand, cut a smile, frown, or straight lips from the red felt. Carefully glue the features onto the face, along with the wiggle eyes. Attach a small red pom-pom for the nose. Attach the small white pom-poms to the elf's body above the belt as buttons.

4. Using either a gold glitter pen or glue and glitter, make a belt buckle on top of the black belt. Let this dry overnight!

5. Use an awl to punch holes below and to each side of a pom-pom button and thread the green garden wire through the holes so that both ends are at the back (you may be able to insert the wire directly through the felt without prepunching holes). Place the candy cane between the wire ends and tighten them so that the elf is attached. Trim the wire and tape the ends to protect the fingers of those who handle the stirrer. Wrap the licorice around the elf's neck as a scarf.

O CHRISTMAS TREE

soft felt ornaments

These simple felt ornaments are fun for all ages. Moms, dads, grandpas, grandmas, and kids as young as three can put them together. They're a wonderful craft to do at a holiday party, and everyone will join in the fun!

MATERIALS

- Compass or a 5-in/12-cm saucer
- Fabric chalk or pen
- Thin cardboard
- Scissors
- Felt in a variety of colors
- Nontoxic clear-drying glue
- Glitter, glitter pens, or markers (optional)
- Small hole punch
- Thin ribbon or decorative cord in a variety of colors

1. Using the compass or a small saucer, draw a circle on the cardboard and cut it out; this is the template for the base of your ornaments. Trace the circle onto felt pieces using the chalk and cut out as many ornaments as you want.

2. Cut out basic small shapes such as triangles, squares, circles, or rectangles in various sizes and colors of felt.

3. Arrange the felt shapes on each ornament base in a pleasing manner—perhaps creating iconic Christmas images such as Santa, a snowman, and the like. Glue the pieces onto the base.

4. For further decoration, use glue and glitter or glitter pens and markers as desired. I find that simple is best for this craft.

5. Punch a hole in the top of the base circle, thread a piece of ribbon through, and tie it into a loop.

6. >Hang your ornament from a tree or wreath with the ribbon or decorative cord.

SIMPLE STOCKINGS

handmade felt stockings

I don't think I'll ever outgrow the joy of opening stockings on Christmas morning. Now, with this project, you can make your own personalized felt stocking to use for many Christmases to come. Make one for every member of your family! These stockings can be filled with small, light items and candy, but, because they're loosely stitched, heavier items will pull the stitching and won't be securely held in the sock.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE STOCKING)

- Two 12-by-12-in/30.5-by-30.5 cm squares of felt
- Straight pins
- Chalk or marking pen
- Stocking Template (see page 113)
- Sharp scissors
- Thick, strong embroidery thread or quilting thread in various colors
- Large-eyed, strong sewing needle
- Nontoxic glue
- Any combination of ribbon, rickrack, and colorful buttons in a variety of sizes
- Felt scraps (optional)

1. Take two pieces of felt and pin them together. Use the chalk or pen to trace the stocking template onto it—this will give you one stocking shape for the front and one for the back. Cut out both. (You can adjust the size of the template with a copier depending on how big or small you want it.)

2. Pin the two sides of the stocking together. Thread the needle and make large stitches, about ½ in/12 mm long and ½ in/12 mm apart, around the edges of the stocking, leaving the top open and stopping about one stitch length from the upper edge.

3. Fold the front, upper edge of the stocking toward the outside, about ¼ in/6 mm, and glue the folded edge down. Place something heavy (like a stapler) on the edge to hold it in place until the glue is completely dry.

4. Decorate your stocking: Try a variety of colors and designs to make it your own. You could cut a piece of ribbon the width of the stocking and glue it about ¼ in/6 mm down from the top edge. You could position the ribbon lower and place a line of buttons above it.

5. If you wish, cut out leaves or petals from the scraps of felt and glue them to the stocking. Allow the glue to dry thoroughly.

6. To hang the stocking, fold the top corner on the heel side into a triangle; using the scissors, cut a notch. Thread a length of ribbon through, tie it into a loop, and trim the loose ends.

A TREAT A DAY UNTIL SANTA BRINGS HIS SLEIGH

advent calendar

This Advent calendar is an exciting way to count down to Christmas Day, and it makes a colorful holiday decoration for the month of December. Kids love hanging the numbers on the garland and taking the tasty little treat from the pocket each day.

MATERIALS

- Advent Calendar Template (see page 114)
- Paper
- Straight pins
- Piece of green felt, 1 yd/1 m square
- Fabric chalk or pen
- Scissors
- 3 yd/2.7 m sturdy red yarn
- Stapler (optional)
- Small wire ornament hooks
- Wire cutter (optional)
- Transparent tape (optional)
- Brass Ring (optional)
- Thumbtacks or hammer and small nails
- Metal ruler

- 4 to 5 felt sheets in assorted colors, 9 by 12 in/23 by 30.5 cm each
- Iron-on adhesive; or thick, strong embroidery thread in various colors and a large-eyed, strong sewing needle
- Iron and ironing board
- Awl
- Metallic or felt pen
- Small wrapped chocolates and candies or toys
- Large, pretty bowl, decorative box, or basket (optional)

MAKE THE CHRISTMAS TREE BASE

1. Copy the Advent Calendar template onto a sheet of paper, enlarging it 200 percent.

2. Pin the template onto the green felt. Fold both layers in half lengthwise and trace the half-tree shape onto the top side of the felt with chalk or pen. Remove the template and, with the felt still folded, cut along the lines of the half tree. When you unfold the felt, you will reveal the full tree.

3. Place the red yarn in a zigzag pattern across the tree, draping it four or five times and working from the top to the bottom, so that it looks like a garland.

   You will be hanging ornaments from the garland, so allow for some give on the yarn as you set it in place. (More garlands can be added to the tree if you will be using the calendar for more than one person or child.)

4. Attach the yarn at the sides of the tree, leaving the middle segments loose so you can hang the ornaments on them. You can either staple the yarn on or use ornament hooks. To use hooks, push them through the felt and over the yarn, then twist them at the back. Trim the ends with the wire cutter and tape them down to protect the fingers of those who handle the

tree.

5. Use thumbtacks or small nails (if you're hanging a lot of ornaments) to attach the tree to the wall, starting at the top and then affixing the bough edges. Make sure the tree is flat and well supported. You could also attach a brass ring to the top of the tree and hang it from a hook on the wall.

MAKE THE ORNAMENTS

1. To make the square ornaments for the tree, use the chalk or pen to mark twelve 2-by-4-in/5-by-10-cm rectangles on various colored felt sheets; cut them out.

2. To make the balls, fold a piece of felt over itself 2 inches and draw circles, each 2 in/5 cm in diameter, on the folded layer. Cut out 12 circles in various colors from the double-layer of felt; as you cut, leave a bit of the folded edge intact, so the bottom remains connected.

3. Fold each rectangle in half to create a square and place strips of iron-on adhesive along the sides between the felt layers, leaving the top open. Iron the pieces of the pouch together, following manufacturer's instructions.

4. To make the ball ornament pouches, place strips of iron-on adhesive between the felt layers along the bottom and halfway up the sides of the circle, leaving an opening of about 1½ in/4 cm at the top. Iron them together, following manufacturer's instructions.

   TIP: If desired, you can use a needle and colorful embroidery thread to sew the ornaments together, instead of using adhesive. Cut a length of thread in a coordinating color about 14 in/35.5 cm long. Thread it through the needle and knot it into a double strand. Start at one side of the pouch opening and stitch down, across the bottom, and up the opposite side, leaving the top edges unsewn. Tie the ends and trim.

5. Using the awl, make a small hole through the back piece at the top of each of the ornaments and slowly push a hook through.

6. Carefully write the numbers 1 through 24 on the ornaments using a decorative pen. Mix up the colors and shapes so that there is variety when they are hung on the tree. (If you have more than one person using the calendar, you may wish to make more than one set of ornaments. You can also assign a specific color or shape to each user.)

ASSEMBLE THE ADVENT CALENDAR

Based on your family tradition or personal preference, place a candy or toy in each pouch and hang it from the yarn garland on the tree, spacing the ornaments out evenly. Alternatively, you can fill the ornaments; leave them in a pretty bowl, box, or basket next to the tree; and then hang them one a day, counting the days up until Christmas Day.

TIP: Be aware when you are choosing candies that some types could melt and ruin the ornaments.

INCREDIBLE EDIBLE ORNAMENTS

decorated cookie baubles

Every year, I use these tasty ornaments as the finishing touches when decorating the tree. On Christmas Day, I take them off and serve them with a steaming cup of hot chocolate. They look darling on the tree and are the perfect treat to end our holiday celebration.

MATERIALS (MAKES 12 TO 15 COOKIES)

- Cookie sheet
- Silicone baking mat or parchment paper
- Small mixing bowl
- 2½ cups/312 g all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
- ¾ tsp/4.5 g salt
- Stand mixer or a hand mixer and large bowls
- ¾ cup/170 g (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup/150 g sugar
- 1 large egg
- ½ tsp/2.5 ml vanilla extract
- ½ tsp/2.5 ml lemon or orange extract
- ¼ to ½ tsp/550 mg to 1.1 g nutmeg (optional)
- Plastic wrap

- Rolling pin
- 4-in/10-cm round cookie cutter
- Plastic straws
- 1 pound (about 4 cups)/455 g powdered sugar
- 6 tbsp/90 ml warm water, plus more if needed
- 3 tbsp/63 mg meringue powder
- Several small cups
- Food coloring
- Damp cloth
- Piping bag or sturdy plastic bag
- Decorations such as Red Hots, mini chocolate chips, colored sugar, colored sprinkles
- Thin ribbon

BAKE COOKIES

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas 4. Line the cookie sheet with a silicone baking mat or parchment paper.

2. In a small bowl, combine the flour and salt.

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer (or using a hand mixer and a large bowl), combine the butter and sugar until the mixture is light and fluffy. Beat in the egg, both extracts, and nutmeg (if using). Add the dry ingredients and mix until the flour is well incorporated.

4. Form the dough into two balls and flatten each one into a 6-in/15-cm disk. Wrap the disks in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

5. Place one piece of dough on a well-floured surface; leave the other in the refrigerator.

6. Using a rolling pin, roll the dough into an 8½-in/21.5-cm circle about ¼ in/6 mm thick.

   TIP: Be sure to keep both the rolling pin and dough lightly dusted with flour. If the cold dough is tough to roll, wait a couple of minutes and try again.

7. Using the cookie cutter, cut as many circles as you can from the dough. Carefully transfer the cookies to the prepared sheet and place them about ½ in/12 mm apart. Use a straw to make a hole about ½ in/12 mm from the edge of each cookie on the sheet.

8. Gather all the dough scraps into a disk and return it to the refrigerator to chill. Roll the dough once more to make more cookies and then discard any scraps.

9. Bake the cookies until they are slightly golden on the edges, 10 to 15 minutes. Let them rest on the tray for 2 minutes and then transfer them to racks to cool completely. Repeat the cutting and baking process with the other disk of dough.

10. Cool the cookies for 45 minutes to 1 hour before decorating them.

DECORATE COOKIES WITH ROYAL ICING

1. To make royal icing, in the bowl of a stand mixer, or in a large bowl if using a hand mixer, combine the powdered sugar, warm water, and meringue powder at low speed. Increase the speed to medium and continue beating until peaks begin to form (6 to 8 minutes). Add a small amount of a warm water (about ½ tsp/2.5 ml) if you want a thinner consistency.

2. Decide what colors of icing you want and pour the mixture

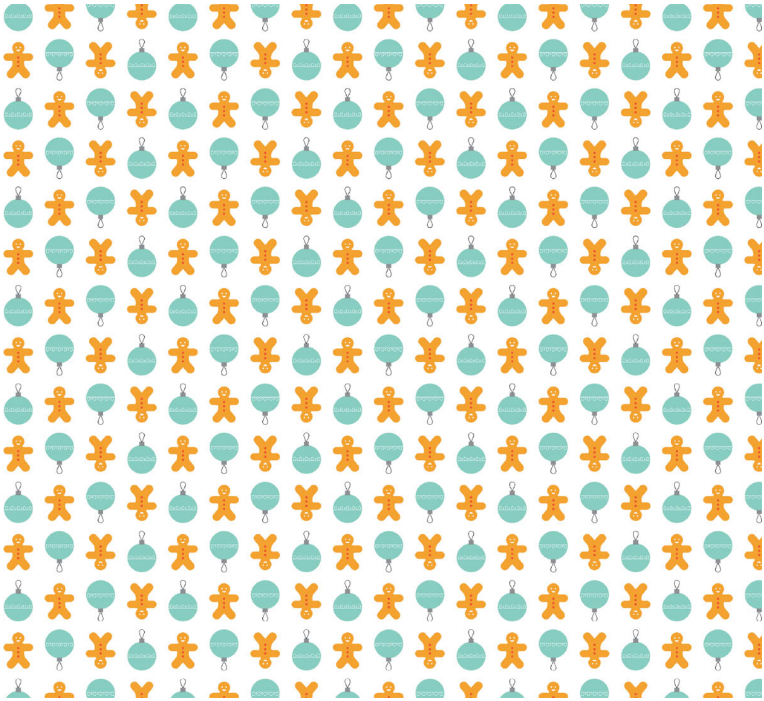
into a corresponding number of small cups. Stir in droplets of food coloring as desired to make your palette. Cover the icing with a damp cloth whenever you are not working with it, so that it doesn't begin to harden.

TIP: Practice your design on parchment paper before icing cookies.

3. Transfer icing to a piping bag and decorate the cookies with lines, swirls, circles, and dots. Press the tiny candies into the icing as well. Let the icing dry completely.

   TIP: You can use a sturdy plastic bag if you don't have a piping bag. Pour icing into the bag and squeeze it down into one bottom corner, snip off a tiny piece of the corner, and proceed as with a piping bag.

4. Carefully thread a ribbon through the hole in each cookie, tie it in a loop, and hang the ornament on the tree.



CORN ON THE COB

popcorn kwanzaa collage

Hang this on your front door to welcome family and friends who come visiting during the weeklong Kwanzaa holiday. It's fun to nibble on the popcorn as you assemble the collage, and the end result is a festive one-of-a-kind holiday decoration.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE COLLAGE)

- Pencil
- Kwanzaa Corn Template (see page 115)
- 1 sheet each card stock in yellow and green, 8½ by 11 in/21.5 by 28 cm
- Scissors
- Nontoxic glue
- 2 big bowls (about 12 cups/2.8 L) freshly popped popcorn (without butter)
- Brown marker or glitter glue pen (optional)
- Masking tape

1. Using a pencil, copy the whole template (showing the ear of corn and the husk) onto the green card stock. Trace the corncob only (the large, central shape) onto the yellow card stock. Cut out both parts.

2. Brush a thin layer of glue onto the bottom of the yellow

corncob cutout and attach it to the green husk, over the middle cob section. Let dry for 10 minutes. This will give the paper added strength to support the popcorn.

3. Glue popcorn to the corncob. For added depth, after you've made one layer of popcorn, glue additional popped kernels on top of that. Allow the collage to sit undisturbed until it is fully dry.

4. To give the piece even more pop, use the brown marker or glitter pen to outline the leaves on the husk.

5. Attach the collage to your front door with loops of heavy-duty masking tape. You may wish to create two to four cobs and arrange them in a fan formation on the door.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

paper poppers

These unbelievably simple crackers are a great way to ring in the New Year. Kids will love making poppers—have them create one for each guest at your New Year's party. If you want to add an extra surprise, write a quote or a fortune at the top of each paper crown. Pull the popper top off as you celebrate. There won't be noise, but you'll find gifts inside—a celebratory crown and, if you're lucky, a New Year's fortune. A perfect way to bring in the new year.

MATERIALS (FOR ONE POPPER)

- Assortment of colored tissue paper pieces, including one full sheet (for the crown—one crown per popper)
- Scissors
- Cardboard tube from a toilet paper or paper towel roll (cut the paper towel roll into thirds)
- Nontoxic craft glue
- Double-sided tape (optional)
- Colored construction paper or silver paper
- Metal ruler
- Paper cutter (optional)
- Fun holiday ribbon in contrasting colors, cut into 10-to-12-in/25-to-30.5-cm lengths

- Confetti
- Selection of tiny toys
- Pencil with eraser
- Multicolored glitter glue pen or glitter and glue

WRAP THE TUBE

1. Fold a piece of tissue paper double and trim it so that it is 10 to 12 in/25 to 30.5 cm longer than the cardboard tube.

2. Using a small amount of glue or double-sided tape, attach one edge of the tissue paper to the tube, centering the tube on the paper. Roll the tube to cover it with tissue paper and seal the edge with glue or tape.

3. Cut a piece of construction paper the exact width of the tube (if you have one, a paper cutter will do this job quickly and precisely). Place the tissue-paper-covered tube on top of the heavier paper and repeat the rolling-and-wrapping process.

4. Once the tube is dry (if you used glue), use a length of ribbon to tie the tissue paper at one end of the tube. As you tie the ribbon, slowly gather the tissue together; be careful not to tear it. Set the tube aside while you prepare the items you'll put into it.

MAKE THE TISSUE PAPER CROWN

1. Begin with a piece of colorful tissue paper 2 feet long and 4 inches wide.

2. Fold it in half lengthwise. Fold one end to the other end, this time widthwise. Fold widthwise two more times. You should have a piece that is 4 in/10 cm or more tall and 3 in/7.5 cm or more wide.

3. Using scissors, cut along one short side to create the pattern of the crown—either a simple and traditional inverted V shape (which will open out into a zigzag) or a variation of your choice.

4. If desired, fold the crown in half again and cut out a small piece from the middle of the band—this makes for a fancier decoration.

5. Check the sizing by using a child's or adult's head as a model and then glue the tissue paper band and let it dry. You can either insert the hat directly into the tube or open it to check your handiwork and then refold.

   NOTE: Different head sizes require different hat sizes! For larger hats, make the crown with a larger piece of tissue paper or punch a small hole in either end of the finished crown and tie a piece of ribbon to each hole; this allows the wearer to adjust the size as needed.

FILL AND FINISH THE POPPER

1. Insert the crown, confetti, and toys into the open end of the tube, using the eraser end of a pencil to gently push the crown in. Using another piece of ribbon, tie the popper closed, gathering the paper tightly, so nothing falls out. Trim a bit of tissue paper from either side, if desired.

2. Decorate the popper with lines, dots, and squiggles, using a glitter pen, glue and glitter, confetti, ribbon—whatever you like.

BOXING DAY FESTIVE BLOOMS

origami flowers

This is a great activity that involves recycling! Use your leftover holiday paper to create these beautiful origami lotus flowers. Thin paper is definitely easier to work with; multiple folds can become difficult with thicker paper. There are two versions of the flowers, the second being easier for smaller children. Just cut, fold, and—voilà!—your paper scraps become lovely decorations for the rest of the season.

MATERIALS

- Leftover holiday paper, trimmed into squares of various sizes from 6 in/15 cm up to 7½ in/19 cm

VERSION 1

1. Place a paper square with the colored side facing up on your worktable and fold it in half along the diagonal. Unfold it and make another fold along the other diagonal.

2. Fold and unfold the paper on the horizontal and vertical midlines. The paper will now show nice reference lines for making your flower.

3. With the white or backside facing up, fold one corner in to the center point. Repeat this fold for the other three corners, so that all points are in the center and you have a smaller square.

4. Repeat the process twice more, each time bringing all corners

to the center and making a smaller square.

5. Flip the square over and fold the corners in to the center again; now you will have a very tiny square. Reach behind one corner and carefully pull the flap around to the front, easing the adjacent flaps open as you go, so as to not tear the paper. Once the corner is pointing up, fold the flaps back down. Repeat the process for all corners.

6. Push the lifted corners down gently so as to give the petals some curve; you can also push your thumb into each petal to shape it.

7. For a final touch, untuck the flaps from the bottom, one at a time. This will create a little floating base. These flaps can also be folded upward to give a little curve as well.

VERSION 2

1. Take a paper square and fold it diagonally both ways. Unfold.

2. With the white or back side up, fold all the corners into the center; repeat once.

3. Flip the paper over and fold the corners in as before.

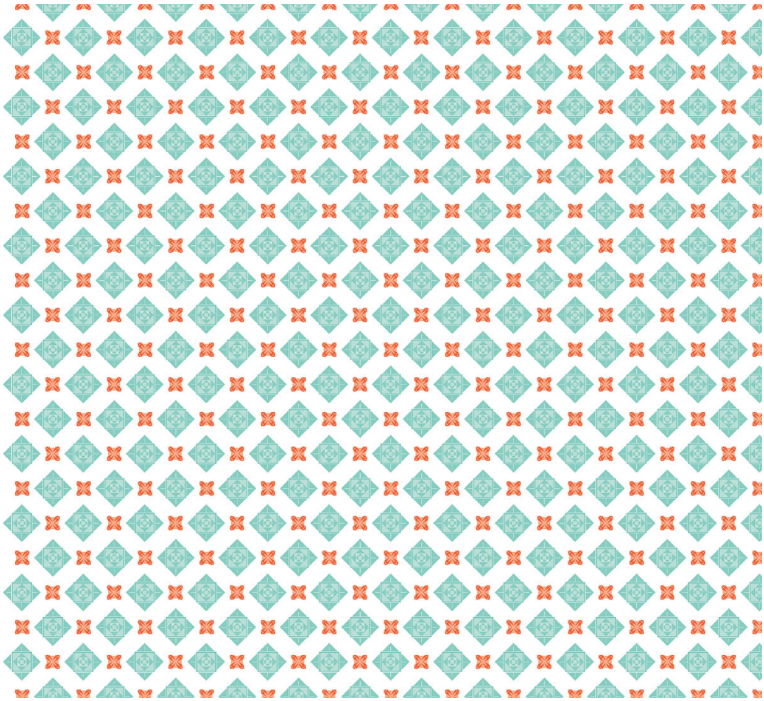
4. Fold each of the corner flaps you have just made halfway out, creating a little raised base for the flower.

5. Flip the paper back over (you should be able to see the pointy tips of the flaps from the previous step sticking out at the sides). Unfold the flaps from the center to the corners.

6. Repeat with the next layer of flaps to create a double layer of petals.

   TIP: If you start folding with the paper decorated side up,

you'll get a colorful flower. If you want a white flower with a hint of color showing through, start with the paper's plain side up.



A SPECIAL PLACE FOR KWANZAA GOODIES

paper basket

Baskets are a wonderful part of African history and culture. This particular basket is loosely based on the Tutsi style and incorporates the colors of the Kwanzaa holiday—black, red, and green. The basket welcomes all the guests who walk into your home with a holiday treat—fill it with homemade cookies or candies!

MATERIALS

- Metal ruler
- Pencil
- Scissors
- 3 sheets black construction paper, 9 by 12 in/23 by 30 cm
- 2 sheets each red and green construction paper, 9 by 12 in/23 by 30 cm
- Clear-drying craft glue
- Kwanzaa Goodie Basket Diagram (see pages 116–117)
- Compass
- Paper clip

1. With the ruler and pencil, measure and cut a sheet of the black paper lengthwise into eight ½-inch-/12-mm-wide strips.

2. Arrange the sheets of red construction paper so that the long sides overlap slightly and glue them together. When the glue

is dry, cut the paper into four strips, each 16 in/40.5 cm long and ½ in/12 mm wide. Repeat the process with the green construction paper to make four green strips.

3. Following the diagrams on pages 116–117, glue two black paper strips together at the center to make a plus sign (A) and then repeat the process three more times with the other strips, so that you have four black plus signs.

4. Once the glue is dry, lay a black plus sign down on your worktable. Place another one on top, fanning it out, and continue with the other pieces so they are spread out like a layered star, with even spaces in between each ray. Glue all the plus signs together at the center (B).

5. Using the compass and ruler, measure and draw a 5-in/12-cm circle on the second sheet of black paper; cut out the circle. Glue the circle to the center of the star to make a base for the basket. Fold the strips over the circle to create the shell of the basket (C).

6. Take a red strip of paper and use a paper clip to attach it to the inside bottom of one of the black rays. Weave this strip in and out of the rest of the rays around the basket until you come back to the clipped end. Remove the paper clip, pulling the strip in slightly to create tension, and glue the red ends together, overlapping them or trimming them, if needed (D).

7. Take a green strip and repeat the weaving process. Start one ray over from where you began with the red strip so that the pattern alternates.

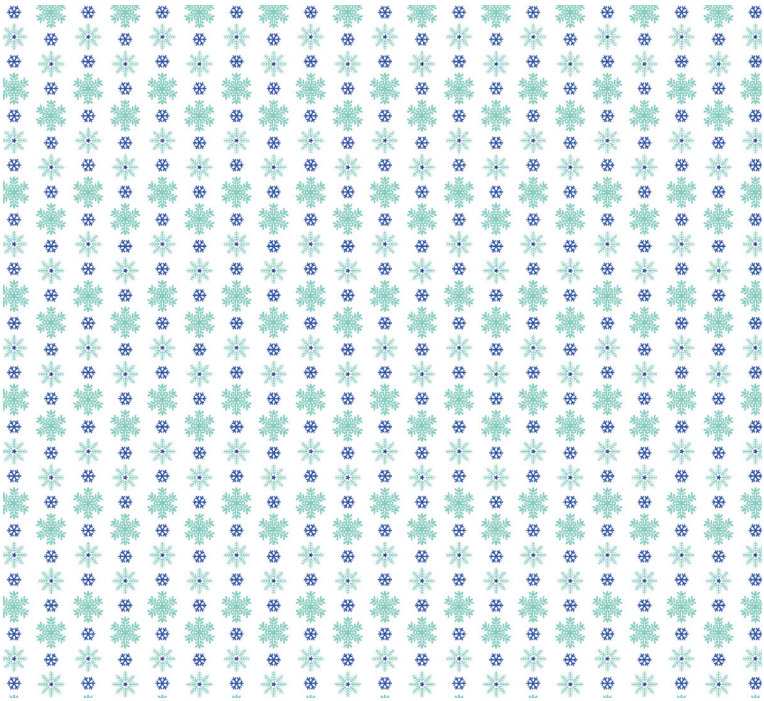
8. Continue weaving in red and green strips alternately until you are out of strips. Fold the black tips over and glue them to the inside of the basket, forming a clean rim.

9. Using the remaining piece of black paper, measure a 9-in/23-cm circle with the compass and ruler and cut it out. Cut a line

from the outer edge to the center of the circle, and dab a bit of glue on one cut end. Overlap the cut edges (E) to form a cone that is just slightly larger at the bottom than the opening of the basket. Glue the cut edges into place. Now you have a lid for your basket (F)!

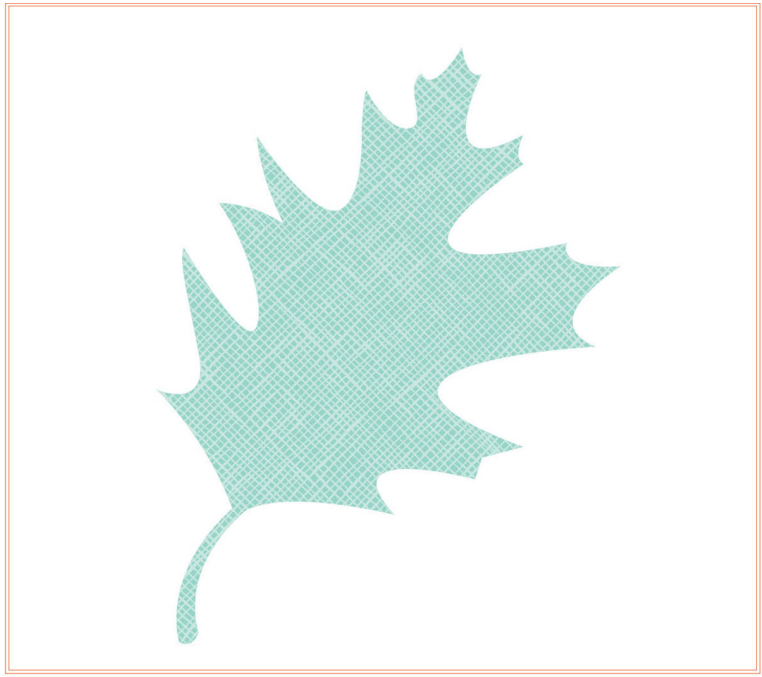
10. Fill the basket with whatever you like, and enjoy.

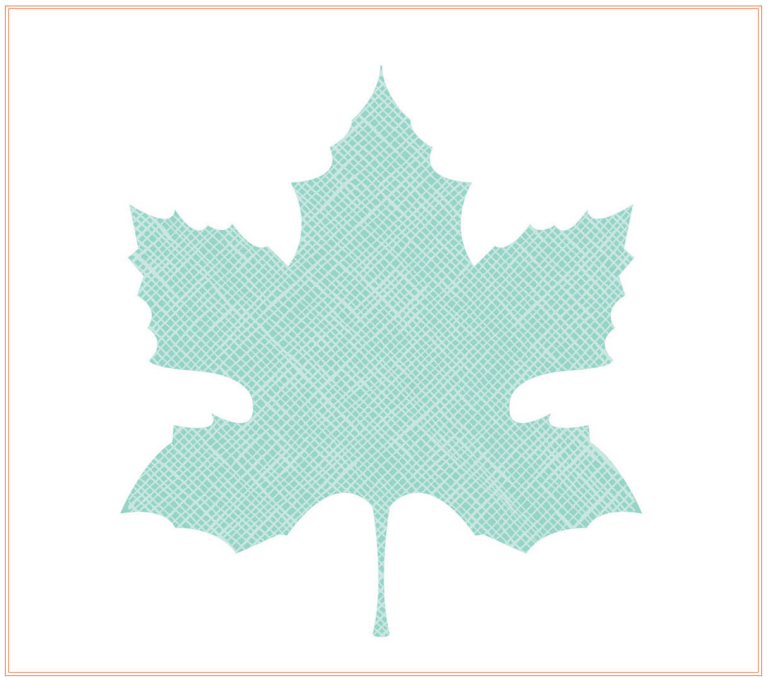
TEMPLATES



LEAF PLACE CARD TEMPLATES

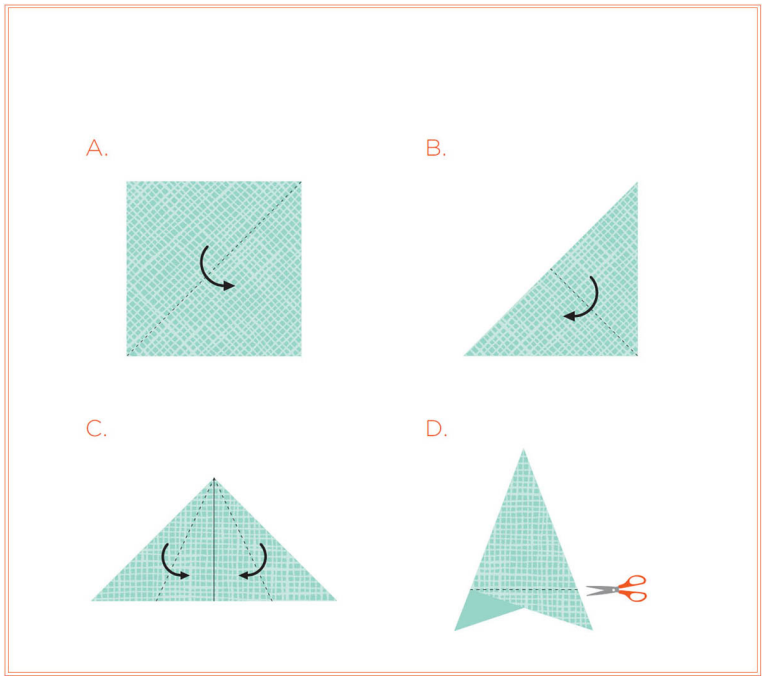
for project on page 25





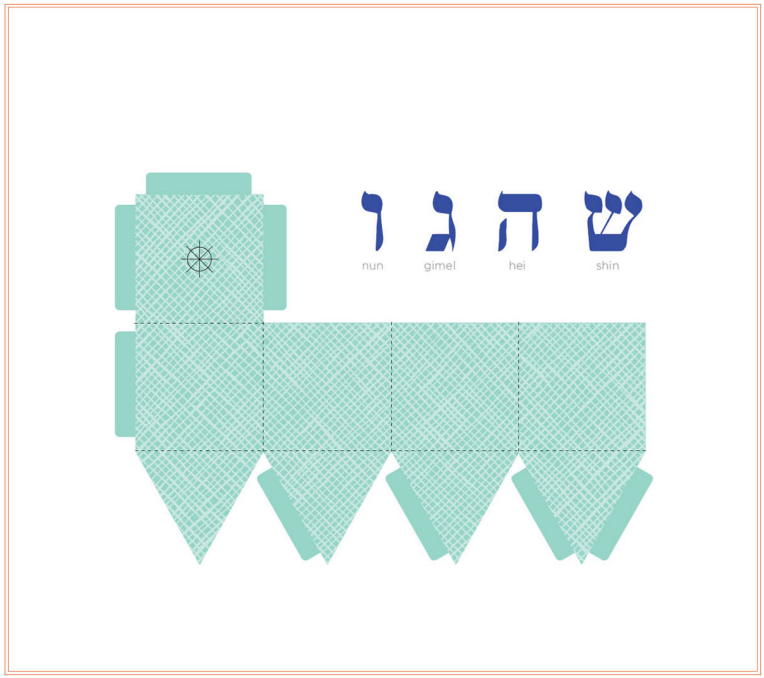
PAPER SNOWFLAKE DIAGRAM

for project on page 29



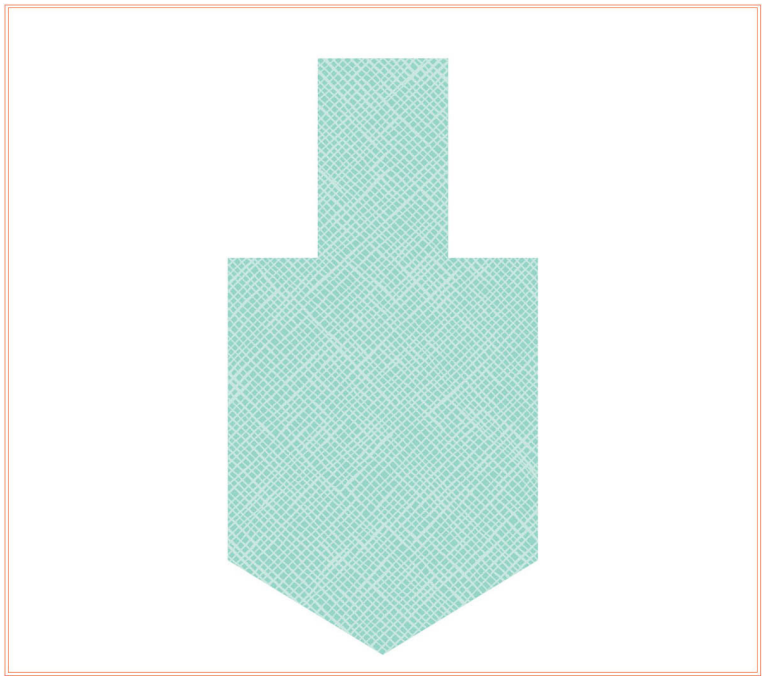
DREIDEL GARLAND TEMPLATE

for project on page 39



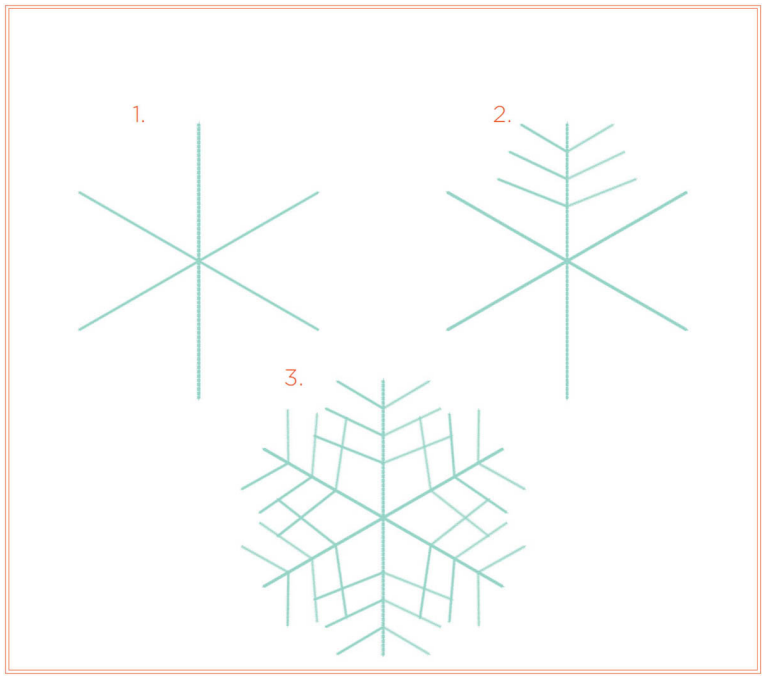
STUFFED DREIDEL TEMPLATE

for project on page 43



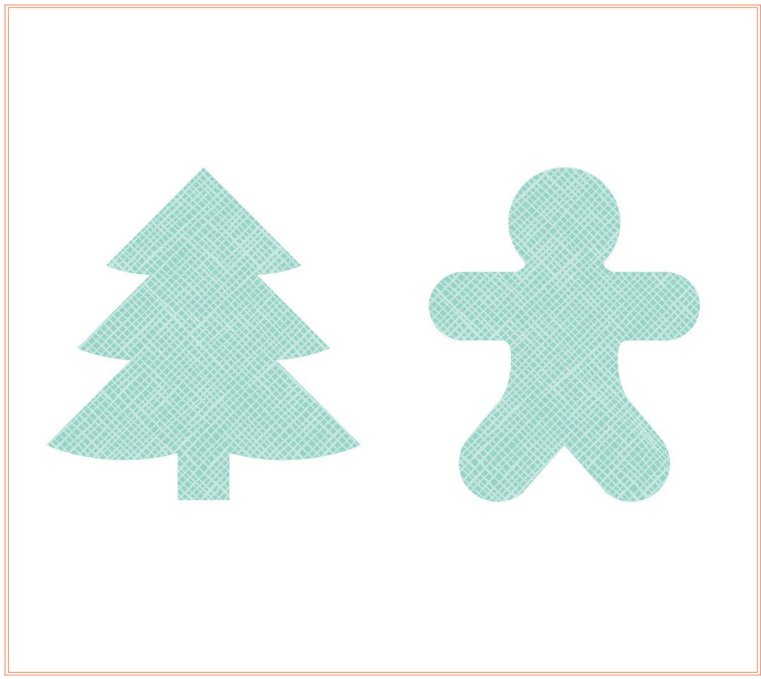
PIPE CLEANER SNOWFLAKE DIAGRAM

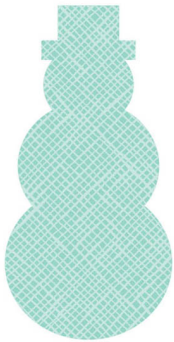
for project on page 59

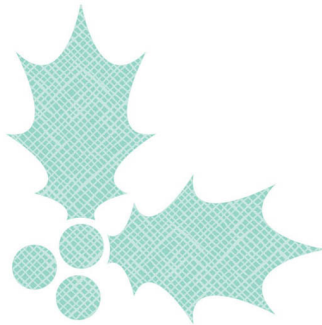


GIFT TAG TEMPLATES

for project on page 53

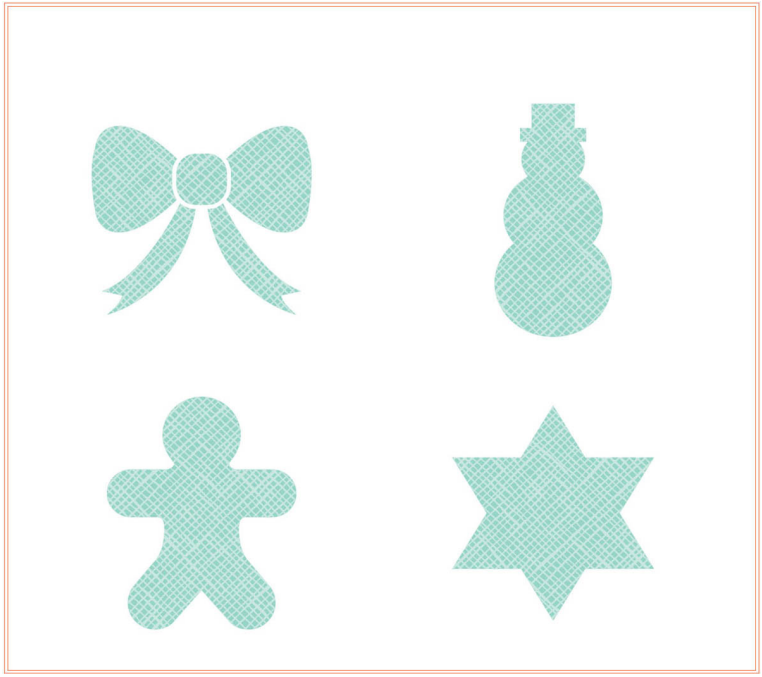






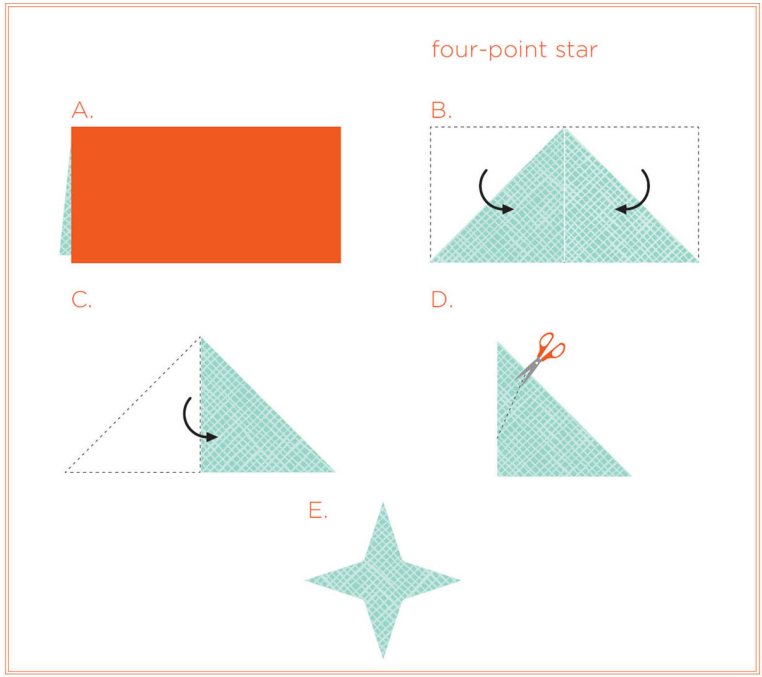
GIFT WRAP TEMPLATES

for project on page 61



FOUR-AND FIVE-POINT STAR DIAGRAMS

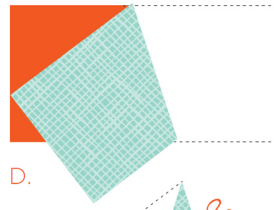
for project on page 65



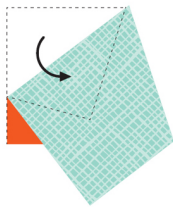
five-point star

A.

B.



C.

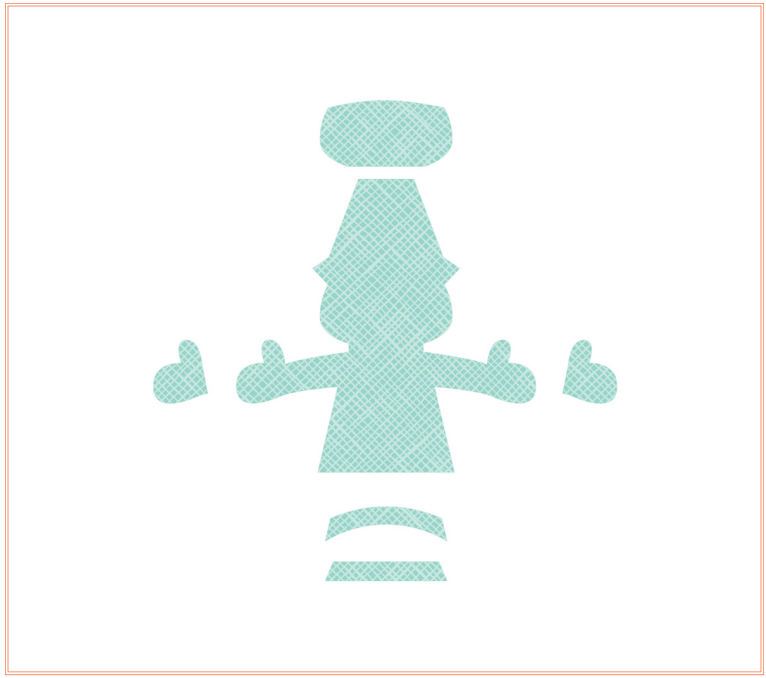


D.

E.

ELF DRINK STIRRER TEMPLATE

for project on page 71

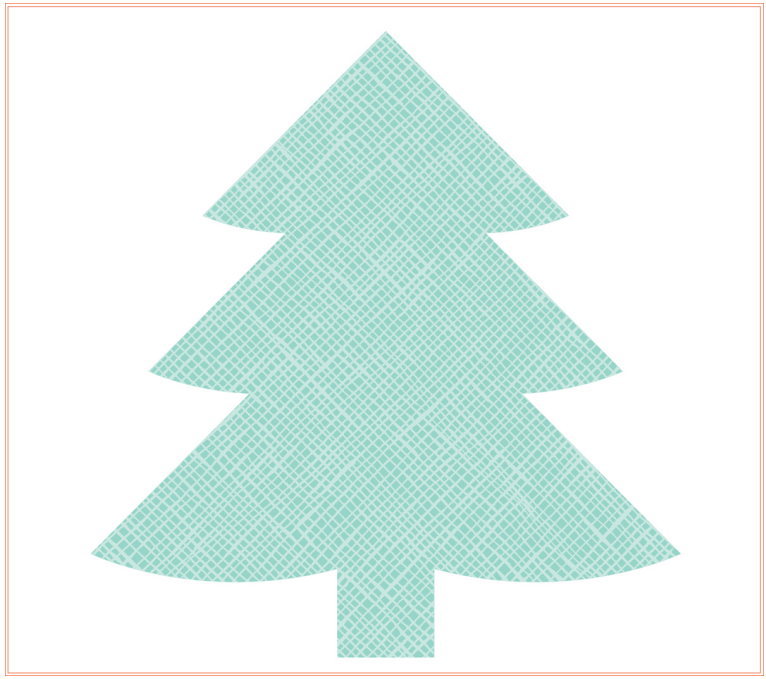


STOCKING TEMPLATE

for project on page 75

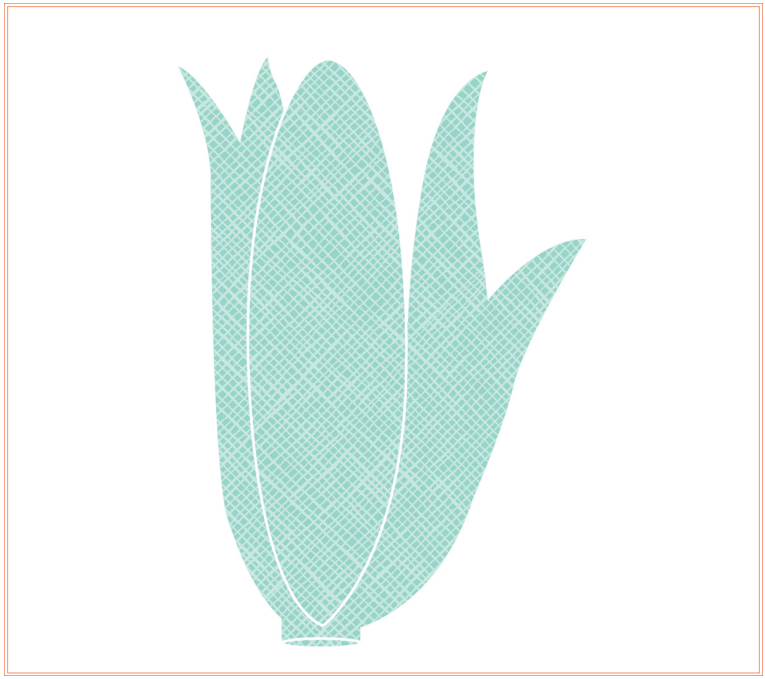
ADVENT CALENDAR TEMPLATE

for project on page 77



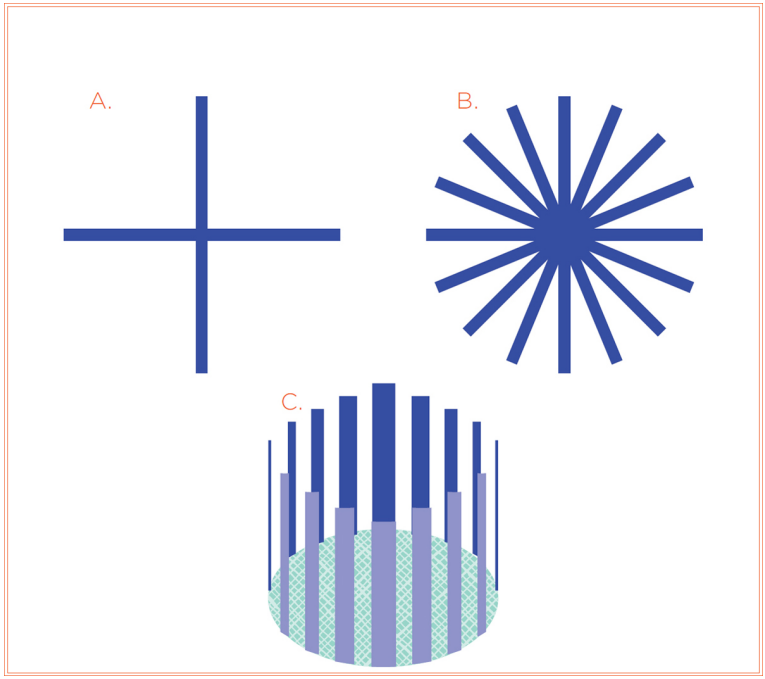
KWANZAA CORN TEMPLATE

for project on page 85



KWANZAA GOODIE BASKET DIAGRAM

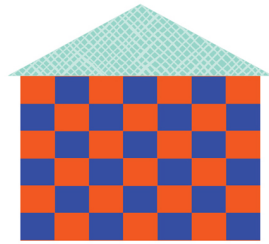
for project on page 95



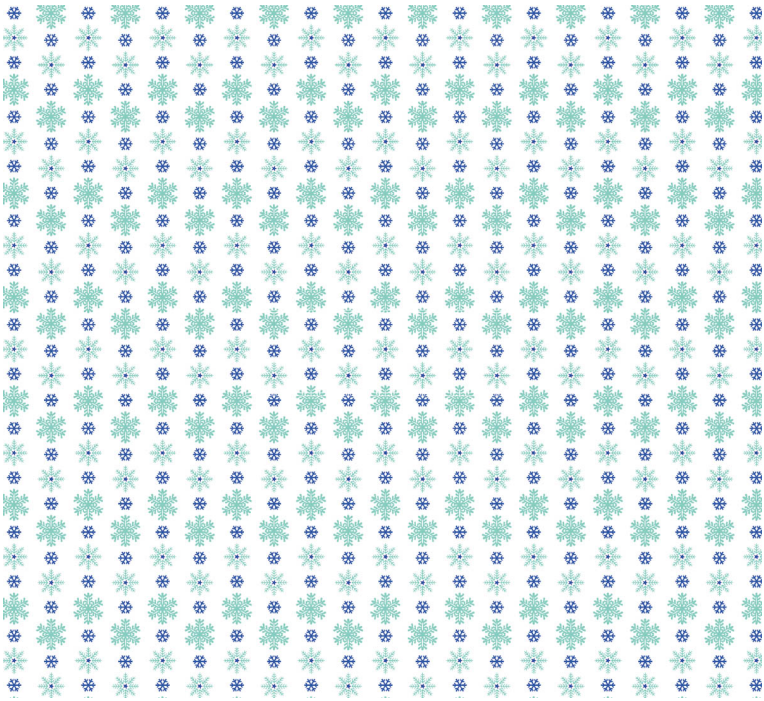
D.

E.

F.



RESOURCES



RESOURCES

You may have a favorite local craft store, florist, or paper store—go there first, because you may find all you need. Many national and online stores stock most craft supplies as well.

STORES TO LOOK FOR IN YOUR AREA:

- A.I. Friedman (New York State only, or online at www.aifriedman.com)
- Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores (or online at www.joann.com)
- Michaels (or online at www.michaels.com)
- Pearl (or online at www.pearlpaint.com)
- Sam Flax (New York City only, or online at www.samflaxny.com)
- Utrecht Art Supplies (or online at www.utrechtart.com)

ONLINE CRAFT SOURCES:

- Amazon: www.amazon.com
- ArtSuppliesOnline: www.artsuppliesonline.com
- BJ's Craft Supplies: www.bjcraftsupplies.com
- Toadily Handmade Beeswax Candles: www.shop.toadilyhandmade.com A great place to order beeswax sheets. Susan, the owner, is very helpful and will offer great hints and tips on using beeswax and the candle-making process.
- Fiber Notion: www.fibernotion.com You can also visit the store at 849 Union Street, Brooklyn, New York. Great ideas! Great supplies!

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TRACY MILLER

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